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Effective client management: maximizing the influence of external sponsors over affiliated armed groups

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THESIS

EFFECTIVE CLIENT MANAGEMENT: MAXIMIZING THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL SPONSORS OVER AFFILIATED ARMED GROUPS

by

Anders C. Hamlin

December 2017

Thesis Co-Advisors: Doowan Lee
Camber Warren

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Special warfare operations often require cooperation and partnership with different types of indigenous affiliated armed groups. These groups may be rebels fighting against a government or militias collaborating with a government. In many cases, the armed groups will go on to form the nucleus of a new regime. As sponsor-affiliate relationships progress over time, objectives and ideology can diverge, leading to problems with, or even termination of, the relationship. This study examines the sponsor-affiliate relationship from the sponsor's perspective, focusing on how successful external sponsors use effective client management to build and maintain influence over extended periods of time. To identify the critical factors of effective client management—those that enable durable, long-running relationships with high degrees of compatibility—this thesis uses quantitative analysis of the Sponsorship of Rebels (SOR), and other data sets, as well as qualitative analysis of Iran's sponsorship of the Iraqi Badr Organization and its offshoots, and of Cuba's sponsorship of the MPLA in Angola. The research supports the delineation of five critical factors of effective client management: sponsor competition, client competition, sponsor oversight, client organizational enforcement, and client dependence. Additionally, the case studies provide historical examples of successful effective client management.

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EFFECTIVE CLIENT MANAGEMENT: MAXIMIZING THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL SPONSORS OVER AFFILIATED ARMED GROUPS

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Special warfare operations often require cooperation and partnership with different types of indigenous affiliated armed groups. These groups may be rebels fighting against a government or militias collaborating with a government. In many cases, the armed groups will go on to form the nucleus of a new regime. As sponsor-affiliate relationships progress over time, objectives and ideology can diverge, leading to problems with, or even termination of, the relationship. This study examines the sponsor-affiliate relationship from the sponsor's perspective, focusing on how successful external sponsors use effective client management to build and maintain influence over extended periods of time. To identify the critical factors of effective client management—those that enable durable, long-running relationships with high degrees of compatibility—this thesis uses quantitative analysis of the Sponsorship of Rebels (SOR), and other data sets, as well as qualitative analysis of Iran's sponsorship of the Iraqi Badr Organization and its offshoots, and of Cuba's sponsorship of the MPLA in Angola. The research supports the delineation of five critical factors of effective client management: sponsor competition, client competition, sponsor oversight, client organizational enforcement, and client dependence. Additionally, the case studies provide historical examples of successful effective client management.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAH	*Asaib Ahl al-Haq*
AIC	Akaike information criteria
ARSOF	Army special operations forces
BM-21	Soviet-built multiple launch rocket system
CC	client competition
CD	client dependence
CF	coalition forces
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COE	client organizational enforcement
COIN	counter-insurgency
ECM	effective client management
EFP	explosively-formed penetrator
FAPLA	*Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola*
FLEC	*Front de Libération de l'Enclave de Cabinda*
FNLA	*Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola*
GDP	gross domestic product
GOI	government of Iraq
GLOC	ground line of communication
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
IRGCQF	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force
IRP	Islamic Republic Party
ISCI	Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISR	intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JAM	*Jaish al-Mahdi*
KH	*Kataib Hezbollah*
KIA	killed in action
LH	Lebanese Hezbollah
MFA	*Movimiento das Forças Armadas*

MIA	missing in action
MININT	Cuban Ministry of the Interior
MIR	Mujahedeen of the Islamic Revolution
MK	*Umkhonto weSizewe*
MKO	Mujahedeen-e-Khalq Organization
MLRS	multiple launch rocket system
MOI	Ministry of Interior (Iraqi)
MPLA	*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSA	Non-State Actors dataset
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OLM	Office of Liberation Movements
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PAIGC	*Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*
PCP	Portuguese Communist Party
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMF	Popular Mobilization Forces
POW	prisoner of war
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RAA	remote advise and assist
ROC	receiver operating curve
SADF	South African Defense Force
SC	sponsor competition
SCIRI	Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SO	sponsor oversight
SOF	special operations forces
SOR	Sponsorship of Rebels dataset
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army
SWAPO	South West African People's Organization
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UNITA	*União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*
US	United States
USASOC	United States Army Special Operations Command
USSOF	United States special operations forces
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WDI	World Development Indicators dataset
WIA	wounded in action

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I.   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A.   INTRODUCING THE STUDY

Since 1945, direct interstate conflict has occurred less frequently than intrastate conflict.[1] These civil wars have often seen the intervention of external sponsors in support of local affiliates.[2] In some cases, cooperation between sponsors and affiliates has been highly durable and effective, with the relationship persisting even after the close of hostilities.[3] Iran's relationship with Hezbollah is an example of this type of durable, effective relationship.[4] In other cases, the sponsor-affiliate relationships have been fraught with difficulty—local proxies have pursued their own objectives at their sponsors' expense, publicly decried their sponsors' presence, or simply given up.[5] External sponsors have even found themselves engaged in conflict with their erstwhile partners.[6] The case of Jordan and the Palestinian Liberation Organization is an example of a particularly troubled sponsor-client relationship—especially considering the tragedy of "Black September."[7] Understanding how best to build and maintain influence with local affiliates is essential for U.S. military and intelligence professionals as the United States increasingly finds itself involved in these civil wars and internal conflicts.

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1 Chris Loveman, "Assessing the Phenomenon of Proxy Intervention," *Conflict, Security and Development* 2, no. 03 (2002): 30, 45–46.

2 Daniel Byman et al., *Trends in Outside Support for Insurgent Movements* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2001), 11–16; Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervention in Intrastate Conflict* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 153–58.

3 James Alec Garrison, Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance' The Determinants of Iran's Affiliate Relationships (master's thesis, Canberra: ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University, 2016), 21–22.

4 Garrison, Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 41.

5 Idean Salehyan, "The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 54, no. 3 (June 2010): 495, 502, 504–05.

6 Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 33–34, 91–92; Milos Popovic, "Fragile Proxies: Explaining Rebel Defection against Their State Sponsors," *Terrorism and Political Violence* (2015): 1–2.

7 Helena Corban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation, People, Power and Politics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 48–53; Salehyan, "The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations," 504–05.

B. IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The problem of maintaining the allegiance of local allies is not a new one. During the Peloponnesian War both the Spartans and Athenians learned from Perdiccas, the mercurial king of Macedonia, how frustrating it can be to deal with local partners of questionable loyalty. Perdiccas repeatedly betrayed both of the great city-states during the war—flipping sides four times.[8] Proxy war scholar Brian Glyn Williams has likewise pointed out that, during ancient Israel's civil war between David and King Saul, the Philistine king Achish provided David and his men with sanctuary—thinking them to be allies against Saul.[9] However, David was deceiving Achish about his attacks against Israel, and after the Philistines defeated Saul, their erstwhile affiliate David went on to smite them in turn.[10] In antiquity, military alliance and provision of sanctuary were not sufficient in and of themselves to maintain control or influence over affiliated forces. Neither are more modern forms of assistance like diplomatic recognition, provision of high-tech military equipment, or information operations sufficient in today's world. Clients have their own interests, goals and objectives, along with ethnic or ideological identities that may be distinct from those of their sponsor.[11] External sponsors must combine means of support in ways that build influence—seeking to align client objectives and ideology with those of the patron. Doing otherwise risks the problems associated with unreliability or, even worse, betrayal.

C. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this study is to identify the most effective ways in which external sponsors build influence with their local affiliates. It is written for an audience composed

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8 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 69–70, 175, 312, 340–43, 345, 398–400, 483.

9 Brian Gly Williams, "Fighting with a Double-Edged Sword? Proxy Militias in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya," in *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates and the Use of Force*, ed. Michael Innes (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 61–62; *The Holy Bible, King James Version*, n.d., 1 Samuel 27:1-28:3, 29:1-30:17.

10 Williams, "Fighting with a Double-Edged Sword," 62; *The Holy Bible*, 1 Samuel 27:8–12, 2 Samuel 5:17–25.

11 Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 101.

of military and intelligence practitioners serving the United States or other nation-states. Therefore, this thesis will focus only on states as sponsors—even though ethnic diasporas, transnational terrorist groups like al-Qaeda, multinational corporations, religious groups, NGOs—or even individuals—can act as external sponsors.[12] Similarly, states can serve as local clients for an external sponsor.[13] Indeed, much of the proxy warfare literature examines this sort of relationship—one which was especially prevalent during the Cold War.[14] However, this study will focus only on non-state armed groups as clients, as many of the study's readers are special operators employed by state sponsors, and are regularly tasked to work with non-state armed groups. A non-state armed group could be an insurgent fighting against a government, a terrorist organization, or some type of militia colluding with the government against another threat.[15] Over time, the relationship between these non-state groups and state power may change—a fact that will not remove them from the scope of this study. Because of the state/non-state actor relationship being explored, this study will only consider cases that occurred within the modern nation-state system. This study will not be limited geographically to any single region of the world. However, complex conflict environments with multiple sponsors and multiple armed groups are likely to be the most challenging environments for effective client management. Therefore, the qualitative chapters will be limited to cases where there were multiple state or non-state actors involved in the sponsorship effort—whether they were competing for influence or formally cooperating. This will tighten the study's scope, and enable examination of how external sponsors interact with each other.

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12 Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 45; Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 71–73; William Rosenau, and Peter Chalk, "Multinational Corporations: Potential Proxies for Counterinsurgency?," in *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates and the Use of Force*, ed. Michael A. Innes (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 137–52.

13 Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 45.

14 Mumford, *Proxy Warfar*e, 2–3; Yaacov Bar-Simon-Tov, "The Strategy of War by Proxy," *Cooperation and Conflict* XIX (1984): 263–73; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 13–14.

15 Paul Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 5 (2015): 770–93; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 45.

D.   RESEARCH QUESTION

This thesis will seek to answer the following question, "What are the most successful methods that state sponsors use to build and maintain influence over affiliated non-state groups?"

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Understanding the relationships between external sponsors and local affiliates, identifying the key means used to build influence in those relationships, and then analyzing how the relationships are maintained over time touches on, but is not limited to, three main fields of academic literature: proxy warfare, insurgencies and support for insurgents, and alliance formation.[16] This diverse body of academic literature has a gap when it comes to studying client management from the perspective of the sponsor.[17] Idean Salehyan and other exponents of principal-agent theory address this deficiency theoretically, but only the recent research of Milos Popovic directly examines the conditions that lead clients to defy their patrons or desert them completely.[18] However, Popovic relies primarily on quantitative analysis of conditions, focusing only obliquely on the actions of the sponsor. He advocates study of "how external states manage militant actors" as one of his "avenues for future research."[19] Henning Tamm takes things a step further, focusing on how external sponsors can use their support to affect the cohesion of their clients—a critically important shift in focus, but one limited to the organizational aspect of influence.[20] This thesis will build on the work of Salehyan, Popovic, Tamm and other scholars to develop a theory of effective client management.

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16 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 13–14.

17 In addition to his broader work, Byman has also examined the Sponsor-Client relationship between state sponsors and terrorist groups. This is a more limited subset of cases than this thesis will consider. Daniel Byman, *Deadly Connections, States that Sponsor Terrorism* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*. Regan has also studied foreign intervention in Civil Wars, though his findings are less practical for effective client management than those of the principal-agent theorists. Patrick M. Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers*.

18 Salehyan, "The Delegation of War to Rebel Organizations"; Idean Salehyan, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and David E. Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups," *International Organization* 65, no. 4 (Fall 2011): 709–44; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies."

19 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 940.

20 Henning Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources: How State Sponsors Affect Insurgent Cohesion," *International Studies Quarterly* 60 (2016): 599–610 While Tamm's analysis was primarily qualitative in nature, he drew from the NSA and UCDP data sets to back up his arguments.

A. LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

The literature on proxy warfare is quite diverse. During the Cold War, much of the writing on the topic referred to the United States or the Soviet Union using smaller states as proxies to fight regional conflicts in which the larger powers had an interest.[21] Contemporary proxy warfare writers have expanded their view to include non-state actors as "proxies" or as benefactors.[22] Most of the proxy warfare literature incorporates the following key features of the patron-client relationship: "compatibility of interests" (having a common enemy), cooperation against that enemy, and some measure of sponsor influence over its "proxy."[23] A notable exception is Andrew Mumford. His definition of "proxy warfare" is broad, and does not include influence as a necessary component.[24] However, he does note the fungible nature of sponsor influence over the course of a relationship, stating that "[b]enefactor-proxy relations can fluctuate over time,"[25] and that "there is not always a correlation between short-term proxy *success* and long-term benefactor *influence* over the client state or group."[26]

Unfortunately, most writers view proxy warfare through the lens of external *intervention,* which is unnecessarily limiting.[27] It discounts the ability of external sponsors to create "synthetic" local affiliated groups that are heavily influenced—perhaps

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21 Bar-Simon-Tov, "The Strategy of War by Proxy," 263.

22 Research on non-state sponsors is more limited. Loveman, "Assessing," 30–31; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 45; Michael A. Innes, ed., *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates and the Use of Force* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012); Accounts of non-state support for non-violent social movements or organizations are easier to find. One prominent example is the support provided by unions and the Church to Solidarity in Poland during the 1980s. Gregory F. Domber, *Empowering Revolution, America, Poland and the End of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

23 As quoted in Loveman, "Assessing," 31–32; Bar-Simon-Tov, "The Strategy of War by Proxy," 271–72; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 22–23.

24 Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 1.

25 Mumford, 19.

26 Mumford, 101.

27 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 12; Loveman, "Assessing," 30–31; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 1.

even controlled—by the sponsors.[28] It also truncates attention paid to the patron-client relationship, viewing it as an element of the local insurgency or civil war being studied—a viewpoint that discourages a long-term perspective on the relationship, and how it may develop after the war is over.[29] Hence, the ideal perspective on sponsor-affiliate relationships should address their indirect nature, as well as the matter of varying levels of control or influence by the sponsor over the affiliate. Jeff Bales does an excellent job of this when discussing terrorist "proxies": developing a spectrum that ranges from "state-directed" terrorists to "state-sanctioned" terrorists.[30] However, his distinction is necessarily limited to terrorists—one type of non-state armed group.

More useful is Jim Garrison's "Taxonomy of Affiliates."[31] Developed for the purposes of identifying the differences between Iran's affiliated armed groups, Garrison's taxonomy uses "identity and ideology, geopolitical objectives, and material dependence" to clarify and define the terms "surrogate," "proxy," and "partner" that are so often used interchangeably in the literature.[32] For Garrison, a surrogate is an affiliate that is materially dependent on its patron for existence, and therefore does whatever is required by that patron—an example being SCIRI during the Iran-Iraq War.[33] A proxy's relationship is characterized by a high degree of ideological or identity-based affinity with its sponsor.[34] Though not under the control of a sponsor like a surrogate is, proxies will generally go out of their way to assist their sponsors, as Lebanese Hezbollah does for

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28 Ryan C. Agee and Maurice K. Duclos, "Why UW: Factoring in the Decision Point for Unconventional Warfare" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2012), 18, http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/27781/12Dec_Agee_DuClos.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

29 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 12, 22.

30 Jeffrey M. Bales, "Terrorists as State 'Proxies:' Separating Fact from Fiction," in *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates and the Use of Force*, ed. Michael Innes (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 25–26; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 16.

31 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 22–26.

32 Garrison, 23.

33 Garrison, 23–24, 56–59.

34 Garrison, 24–25.

Iran.[35] Partner-sponsor relationships are characterized by shared geopolitical goals.[36] The sponsor may gain some influence due to its support of the partner, but the partner is unlikely to act outside of its own narrowly defined interests to support the sponsor.[37] While Hamas may receive material support from Iran to fight Israel, it is not going to join the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) proxy forces in supporting the Assad regime in Syria.[38] This taxonomy is useful because it highlights the different levels of influence held by a sponsor, and acknowledges that those levels can change over time. Therefore, this research will use the terms "surrogate," "proxy," and "partner" in the manner defined by Garrison. When distinction is not necessary, or when groups are aggregated, they will be referred to as affiliates, affiliated groups, or clients.[39]

B.   TYPES OF CLIENT

This study focuses on these non-state armed groups and their relationship over time with external sponsors. Some of these affiliated groups may be insurgents, others may be militias; at times, they may participate in criminal or terrorist activities. When taking a long-term view, these groups are best aggregated as armed groups participating in what Paul Staniland describes as "armed politics," as opposed to defining them narrowly by their relation to the state, or by their activities.[40] Today's insurgent group fighting against the state could be tomorrow's militia colluding with the state against other insurgents.[41] Next month, the state could even attempt to incorporate that militia into the state's official security forces.[42] Insurgents can topple and replace the

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35 Garrison, 69.

36 Garrison, 25.

37 Garrison, 25–26.

38 Garrison, 25–26, 69, 76.

39 Affiliate is the term used consistently by Garrison as a catch-all for these different sponsored groups. Client is another word that indicates influence by a patron; Sharon Kettering, "The Historical Development of Political Clientelism," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* XVIII, no. 3 (Winter 1988): 419–47; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 3.

40 Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 788.

41 Staniland, 788.

42 Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 772, 775, 788.

government, or establish a quasi-state.[43] These changes can have significant effects on the client's organizational cohesion, its dependence on the sponsor, and its relationship with other actors in the conflict environment. In this study, these changes from insurgent to militia, militia to military unit, or insurgent to revolutionary government will not be the end of the analysis of that group; rather they will be treated as critical transition points that a sponsor must manage in order to maintain its influence over time.

C.   SPONSOR OBJECTIVES

State benefactors have many reasons to sponsor affiliated armed groups. Sponsorship is a low-risk, high-reward alternative to state-on-state war—an alternative that is even more appealing due to the high human and economic costs of modern conventional warfare.[44] By supporting insurgents or other armed groups, external sponsors almost always seek to further their own geopolitical objectives.[45] However, their patronage can draw from a number of motivations, including: the desire to build regional influence, destabilize or exact concessions from other states, effect regime change, get revenge, attack insurgent or terrorist sanctuaries in the target country, gain influence with a resistance group, gain international status and renown, satisfy domestic demands (especially those of co-ethnics or co-religionists), further irredentist goals, advance left-wing ideology, or simply benefit from corruption and the spoils of war.[46] The majority of these motivations require the development and maintenance of patron influence over the client to be effective.

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43 Pål Kolstø, "The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States," *Journal of Peace Research* 43, no. 6 (November 2006): 723–40.

44 Loveman, "Assessing," 45–46; Innes, *Making Sense of Proxy Wars*, ix; Seyom Brown, "Purposes and Pitfalls of War by Proxy: A Systemic Analysis," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 27, no. 2 (2016): 244–47; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups" In this article, Salehyan et al. use the EACD data set to test the conditions in which states are most likely to sponsor rebel groups.

45 Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 40.

46 Byman, 23–40; Salehyan, "Delegation," 505; Navin A. Bapat, "State Bargaining with Transnational Terrorist Groups," *International Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (March 2006): 213–29.

D.   EFFECTIVE CLIENT MANAGEMENT

This thesis is concerned with assessing how external sponsors develop and maintain *influence* over their affiliated armed groups—how sponsors conduct *effective client management*. Therefore, a framework is required to define both influence and effective client management. For the purposes of this study, influence will be understood as the degree to which a client alters either its objectives or its ideology in response to the requests or demands of a sponsor. Effective client management means that sponsors are leveraging the support they provide their local affiliates to build influence. In many cases, it also entails competing with other sponsors while reaching out to additional clients. Effective client management is a process that may be conducted with a high degree of subtlety, or it may be conducted nakedly—even brutally.

If the sponsor is conducting effective client management, it will leverage its support to increase compatibility—of objectives/interests, and of ideology—with the client over time. To measure effective client management, it should be possible to qualitatively assess these changes in the compatibility of objectives and ideology between a patron and a client. The longevity of the relationship can also serve as a simple quantitative indicator of the relationship's durability. A sponsor conducting effective client management will minimize desertions and defiance over time.[47]

External sponsors seeking to conduct effective client management have a wide variety of means at their disposal to achieve their objectives in supporting clients. These means include monetary support, material support (including advanced weapons systems and technical/maintenance support), sanctuary and safe-passage, political backing (including diplomacy and propaganda), ideological or religious encouragement,

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47 Milos Popovic uses the catch-all term "defection" to cover both defiance and desertion, defining it as: "…voluntary actions that rebel leadership, commanders, or its factions pursue to maximize their benefits at the expense of the contract that they had previously made with a sponsor. Defection includes verbal and/or physical acts that are unacceptable to, and condemned by, the sponsor. These acts are distinguished by their aim, whether they are aimed at contract termination or not." Defiance includes actions that fall short of contract termination, and desertion covers actions that include contract termination. Popovic's definitions are useful because examples of defiance indicate that sponsors are losing influence over client objectives, while desertion is a direct threat to the durability aspect of effective client management. Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 924–25 Popovic's research catalogues instances of defection--both defiance and desertion.

intelligence support, training, organizational assistance, provision of foreign fighters or advisors, deterrence of intervention against the client, or even active military intervention.[48] As insurgent organizations develop over time, they face different challenges, and thus have different requirements for support.[49] By overtly or implicitly tying fulfillment of these requirements to alignment with the sponsors' objectives or ideology, sponsors develop the ability to build and maintain influence.

An external sponsor can lose influence over an armed affiliate group in five main ways, which may be combined. (1) The affiliate can be defeated. This can be catastrophic defeat, with the client destroyed, or a smaller battlefield or political failure that changes the dynamics of the relationship by fragmenting the affiliated force, eliminating the sponsor's access to the affiliate, or causing the affiliate to reconsider the terms of its relationship with the sponsor.[50] (2) The affiliate can succeed. This can change the calculus of the affiliate in terms of dependence on the sponsor, leading the affiliate to decide it no longer needs to comply with all the sponsor's requests, changing its nature along the surrogate-proxy-partner spectrum, or altogether ceasing its affiliation with the sponsor.[51] (3) Competition—another sponsor can build influence at the expense of the original sponsor.[52] (4) The sponsor may decide to abandon the client due to the client's actions or to unrelated domestic political considerations, may not be able to afford sponsorship, may lose access to the client, or may collapse.[53] (5) The client may decide

48 Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 84–92; Loveman, "Assessing," 30–33; Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 53, 61–72; Kolstø, "The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States," 733–34; Jeffrey Record, "External Assistance: Enabler of Insurgent Success," *Parameters* 36, no. 3 (2006): 36–49; Regan, *Civil Wars and Foreign Powers*.

49 Byman, Outside Support for Insurgent Movements, 100; Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), Chapters 1, 2, 8, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=3138598.

50 Fotini Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 43–45.

51 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 17, 23–26, 69.

52 Salehyan, "Delegation," 502–03, 506; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 50.

53 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 922–23.

to abandon the sponsor because of changes in sponsor policy, or objectives and ideology that grow apart over time.[54]

Loss of influence leading to a client deserting a sponsor is an obvious and dangerous eventuality for the sponsor, but defiance has the potential to be just as destructive over time.[55] For example, external sponsorship is highly correlated with an increased incidence of atrocities against civilians.[56] Democracies can and often do seek to restrain human rights abuses by their clients, but if they are unsuccessful, it can lead to political restrictions on further support to the client—effectively ending the relationship.[57] Desertion and defiance are joined as potential problems for the sponsor by such risks as affiliate banditry, lack of discipline and commitment among the client forces, developing an insurgent "resource curse," potential for over-commitment by the sponsor, and reprisals to the sponsor by the opponents of the affiliate.[58] However, loss of control or influence over the client is this study's main concern. Unfortunately, the majority of the literature does not focus on the problem of control and influence from the sponsor's perspective; instead, it generally discusses ways in which pesky sponsors attach strings to their support in order to gain control over affiliates.

A major exception to this trend is principal-agent theory, which Salehyan, Popovic, Tamm and others use to identify the risks external principals face in delegating their war-making to local agents. Principal-agent theory has also been used to analyze

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54 Popovic, 923–25.

55 Popovic, 924–25.

56 Idean Salehyan, David Siroky, and Reed M. Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Atrocities," *International Organization* 68 (Summer 2014): 633–61 In this study Salehyan et al. combine information from the NSA and UCDP data sets with Polity IV scale information about sponsor governments, and other control data to make their case that democracies—especially those with human rights lobbies—can restrain their clients' more atrocious impulses.

57 Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse," 640–42.

58 Jeremy M. Weinstein, "Resources and the Information Problem in Rebel Recruitment," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (August 2005): 598–624; Williams, "Fighting with a Double-Edged Sword"; Antonio Giustozzi, "Auxiliary Irregular Forces in Afghanistan: 1978–2008," in *Making Sense of Proxy Wars: States, Surrogates and the Use of Force*, ed. Michael Innes (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2012), 89, 93–94, 100, 106; Brown, "Purposes and Pitfalls of War by Proxy"; Kenneth A. Schultz, "The Enforcement Problem in Collective Bargaining: Interstate Conflict over Rebel Support in Civil Wars," *International Organization* 64, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 281–312; Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 53–55.

U.S. relations with Tibetan freedom fighters.[59] The two major risks principal-agent theory identifies are "adverse selection" and "agency slack."[60] Both stem from the sponsor's incomplete knowledge of the agent. Adverse selection refers to the risk a sponsor takes in developing a relationship with a local armed group that may be incompetent, uncontrollable, or simply incompatible with the sponsor's goals.[61] To prevent this risk, Salehyan recommends seeking affiliates that share a common ideology or identity with the sponsor, extensive screening and assessment by experts who possess deep linguistic and cultural knowledge, along with training and indoctrination of the clients—recommendations echoed by United States special operations forces (USSOF) theorists.[62]

This research will examine how external sponsors succeed at building and maintaining influence, or alternatively, how they succumb to the pitfalls that lead to loss of influence, while examining the theoretical and anecdotal suggestions of Salehyan and other authors for managing clients over time. The literature suggests that no single means of support, or method of combining those means, will apply in every case.[63] The different identities, capabilities, environments and organizational structures of both sponsors and affiliates make that unlikely. However, this thesis will propose and examine a series of independent variables whose manipulation by sponsors impacts the conduct of effective client management.

If effective client management (measured by objectives, ideology and durability) is the dependent variable to be assessed, what are the independent variables? This thesis hypothesizes that effective client management is determined by how a sponsor's actions

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59 Tyler G. Van Horn, "The Utility of Freedom: A Principal-Agent Model for Unconventional Warfare" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2011).

60 Salehyan, "Delegation," 495; Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, "External Rebel Sponsorship and Civilian Abuse: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Wartime Atrocities," 639; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 924–25; Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 601; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining Support," 714.

61 Salehyan, "Delegation," 495, 505.

62 Salehyan, "Delegation," 505; Donald K. Reed, and Matthew P. Upperman, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Selecting and Vetting Indigenous Leaders" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013).

63 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 229; Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 10, 17.

affect client organizational enforcement, client dependence, sponsor oversight, client competition, and sponsor competition.

E.   CLIENT ORGANIZATIONAL ENFORCEMENT

Client organizational enforcement describes the client group's ability to enforce leadership decisions and synchronize the organization's activities. A sponsor may have strong influence over the leadership of an affiliated group, but if the group is highly fragmented, and the leaders are unable to put their chosen policies into practice, the effects of that influence will be minimal.[64] Indicators of client organizational enforcement include the client's organizational structure, and degree of centralization and cohesion.[65] Cohesive, centralized organizational structure has a strong negative correlation with examples of client defiance or desertion from sponsors, and sponsors are likely to seek cohesive clients.[66] This does not mean that sponsors will always encourage cohesion among their clients. Tamm demonstrates that disciplining or replacing an uncooperative client leader could require supporting internal rivals, or fomenting a coup in the client force.[67] Indeed, if the sponsor senses that it is losing its influence over the client, it may choose to purposefully fragment the client, building influence over the more pliant splinter groups.[68] The sponsor's objectives often determine the degree to which it meddles with a client's organization: sponsors seeking regime change generally have objectives that are highly compatible with the client, and will increase the client's

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64 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 926.

65 In the non-state actor (NSA) data set the variables centcontrol and strengthcent can be used as indicators of client organizational enforcement. Though I chose to use the SOR data set, these measures from the NSA data set could potentially add further refinement to future quantitative research. Daniel E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "Codebook for the Non-State Actor Data, Version 3.3," January 24, 2012, 4, http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/NSAEX_codebook.pdf.

66 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937–38; Salehyan, Gleditsch, and Cunningham, "Explaining Support," 715.

67 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 599.

68 Tamm, 602.

cohesion while building the strength of the client group.[69] However, sponsors with influence-building objectives are more likely to meddle.[70]

The development of a client group over time can lead to fragmentation or factionalism within the client's organization. It can also lead to consolidation with other groups, and growth in power. Both of these outcomes can have serious implications for the patron's influence or control over the group. Paul Staniland looks closely at the development of insurgent organizations over time, how they draw from pre-conflict networks, and how they interact with counterinsurgent forces and other insurgent groups.[71] His work, which Tamm expands upon from the sponsor's perspective, suggests that wise external sponsors will seek to influence this organizational development to maintain influence.[72] Staniland posits that major splits and defections from the insurgent side to the counterinsurgent side (like the Sunni Awakening) are caused by "incomplete fratricide," when one faction seeks to annihilate a competing faction, and fails.[73] Staniland sees this fratricide and inter-faction competition as a common phenomenon, focusing mostly on its fragmenting effects.[74] Fotini Christia goes deeper, positing that alliance shifts and group "fractionalization" are caused by underlying power dynamics—with groups seeking to maximize their share of post-war political power by aligning themselves with a "minimum winning coalition."[75] Staniland's work also suggests that sponsors should seek to give organizational advice that prevents internal weakness and consequent destruction of affiliates by their opponents; however, at some points, the

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69 Tamm, 601.

70 Tamm, 602.

71 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*.

72 Staniland, 50; Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources."

73 Paul Staniland, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Insurgent Fratricide, Ethnic Defection, and the Rise of Pro-State Paramilitaries," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56, no. 1 (2012): 21.

74 Staniland, 21.

75 Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*, 6–11, 21.

sponsor may have to make the hard choices described by Tamm between the cohesion of the insurgent's organization, and the level of influence the sponsor can maintain.[76]

Encouraging ideological and social linkages within the group and with the sponsor's forces can also enhance an affiliated group's cohesion, further insulating it from splits, and potentially making it more likely to develop into a willing proxy of the sponsor as it gains more power and relies less on sponsor support.[77]

F.   CLIENT DEPENDENCE

Client dependence is the degree of external support that an armed group requires to achieve its objectives. If a client has a strong support base among the local population, can procure its own arms, or is simply fighting a very weak opponent, it has a low degree of client dependence. A client that relies on its external patron for its very survival displays a high degree of client dependence. Additionally, the provision of "private rewards" to key members of the client organization can create dependencies and incentives for alignment with sponsor objectives and ideology.[78] The study will look for the following indicators of client dependence: fighting capacity of the client relative to the opposition;[79] whether the sponsor's support is an essential component of this fighting capacity; the client's independent control of territory as opposed to reliance on the

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76 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 38–41, 50, 53–54; Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources."

77 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 221; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 24.

78 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 926.

79 For cases included in the NSA data set, this indicator is measured by the variables fightcap, rebstrength and mobcap. Though I used the SOR dataset for quantitative analysis, the NSA dataset may provide other variables for future research. David E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "Non-State Actors in Civil Wars: A New Dataset," Conflict Management and Peace Science 30, no. 5 (2013): 516–31; Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Codebook for the Non-State Actor Data Set," 4–6; Daniel E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "Non-State Actor Data: Version 3.4, NSAEX_casedesc.pdf," November 23, 2013, http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/NSAEX_casedesc.pdf; Daniel E. Cunningham, Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, and Idean Salehyan, "Non-State Actor Data," November 21, 2013, http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~ksg/data/nsa_v3.4_21November2013.asc.

sponsor for sanctuary;[80] and degree of popular support. High client dependence is likely to have a positive correlation with effective client management—meaning sponsors should seek to create dependencies in order to build influence. This presents a paradox for sponsors with ambitious goals and modest means: in many cases, sponsors may not be willing or able to provide the level of support a client requires to achieve its own and the sponsor's objectives. Therefore, the sponsor may have to guide the client as it develops its own means of increasing fighting capacity relative to the opposition, and decreases client dependence.

Scholars mention numerous means of support that tie development of client dependence to influence over the client's organizational structure. Tamm is most explicit about the relationship between this study's first and second independent variables. His argument is that external sponsors use their provision of resources to influence client organization.[81] He is not alone though. Mumford mentions delivering enough materiel to allow one client faction to dominate all others, and linking material support with ideological alignment.[82] This massive increase in power could discourage Christia's "fractionalization."[83] However, it would seem to precipitate Weinstein's dreaded "resource curse," damaging the group's effectiveness.[84] Fortunately, Staniland's work suggests that the curse can be avoided if financial and material support is combined with organizational advice. His work suggests developing strong networks and institutions prior to flooding resources through them—underlining the interaction of client dependence with client organizational enforcement.[85]

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80 This dynamic is represented by the variables efterrcont, and terrcont vs. rebpresosts and presname in the NSA data set. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Codebook for the Non-State Actor Data Set," 6–7.

81 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources."

82 Mumford, *Proxy Warfare*, 27–28, 35.

83 Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*.

84 Weinstein, "Rebel Recruitment."

85 Weinstein; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 228.

As with provision of resources, sanctuary seems to be an important tool for helping a sponsor exert influence on its clients.[86] Indeed, sponsors should insist on significant control in return for any provision of sanctuary—if only to hedge against the hazardous effects Jordan and Lebanon experienced when their PLO affiliates were uncontrolled in their countries.[87]

G.   SPONSOR OVERSIGHT

At its most basic level, sponsor oversight is a means of preventing agency slack. Agency slack is a term from principal-agent theory that involves the client, or "agent" squandering resources, not fighting, or taking "actions that are contrary to the interests and directives of the patron (e.g., human rights abuses) or in extreme cases, use the patron's resources against it."[88] Sponsors combat agency slack through a combination of monitoring and sanctions. Monitoring can be conducted directly, using advisors and combined operations, or indirectly through a variety of third parties (including competing groups of local agents).[89] It may increasingly be possible to use technical means to monitor local agents using intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms, the newest remote advise and assist (RAA) technology, or in the fashion of Iraqi insurgents, requiring local agents to video-tape attacks or other activities. Sanctions are punishments, or threats of punishment against agents for failing to comply with the conditions set forth by the principal.[90] They must be credible and painful to be effective.[91] Therefore, it may be in the sponsor's interest to cultivate multiple affiliates—in order to threaten transfer of support, and to actively prevent the involvement of other

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86 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 50.

87 Byman, *Outside Support for Insurgent Movements*, 35–36, 86.

88 Salehyan, "Delegation," 504.

89 Salehyan, 502, 506.

90 Salehyan, 502, 506.

91 Salehyan, 502, 506.

sponsors who could replace the sponsor's support.[92] Both of these aspects of effective client management will be dealt with in greater detail later in the study.

Sponsor oversight can be measured by examining indicators like advisor presence and the ratio of sponsor advisors to client forces, the presence of ISR platforms (including local agents) to monitor clients, and the establishment of formal control systems that tie support from the sponsor to certain activities of the client. Progressing beyond simple monitoring means, the sponsor can seek the power to shape or even dictate organizational and personnel choices—an indicator of extremely strong sponsor oversight.[93]

If a prospective sponsor is conducting thorough assessments, it will undoubtedly seek clients that naturally display high degrees of compatibility with respect to objectives and interests, as well as ideology. This does not mean that there is no room for effective client management in the relationship, although a subtle tack may be in order. The development of the sponsor's oversight mechanisms, along with its ability to shape organizational changes and key personnel decisions will likely be just as important for a sponsor trying to maintain the long-term compatibility of a client as it is for a sponsor trying to simply boost its client's organizational enforcement capability, or monitor client compliance.

Sponsor oversight can be closely tied to client organizational enforcement. Sponsor oversight allows external patrons with significant degrees of influence over their clients' organization to know which troublesome personnel may need to be relocated, which ones should be promoted into meaningless positions, or even whether client personnel need to be eliminated to open up key positions to leaders sympathetic to the

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92 Salehyan, 502–03, 506; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 50.

93 Sponsor oversight is a harder independent variable to quantify using indicators from the NSA data set. rtypesup tells whether the sponsor is providing troops--a very rough indicator of monitoring capability. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Codebook for the Non-State Actor Data Set," 7; The UCDP data may provide a better measure, because it shows whether advisors were present. Popovic's research codes the presence of advisors and trainers as "training," which has a "...favorable effect on rebel coherence and discipline..." Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," quote from page 937, results on pages 935–938.

sponsor.[94] However, any type of purges, assassinations or factional takeovers should be conducted in such a manner that they do not provoke "fratricidal flipping" to the opposition.[95] Sponsors should encourage affiliated factions to maintain a higher degree of "permeability" than the opposition.[96] Because sponsor influence over a client's organization in the manner described by Staniland and Tamm is so fraught with the potential for deleterious unanticipated consequences, a high degree of sponsor oversight is required. The Ethiopian and Syrian leaders highlighted in Tamm's case studies used the solid understanding of client organizational dynamics provided by their security services to successfully prevent the SPLM/A coup against John Garang, and to encourage Tufayli's "revolution of the hungry" to discipline Nasrallah, squashing it when the time came.[97] This suggests that sponsor oversight is critical, and the presence of advisors, or—at a minimum—agents of the sponsor with the client's forces, is one of the most important aspects of effective client management. Popovic's quantitative work reinforces this suggestion that advisors and trainers are important parts of effective client management.[98]

H.   CLIENT COMPETITION

Client competition is a function of the environment. Its most basic indicator is the number of competing armed groups that a sponsor may choose to work with in addition to the primary client. The Syrian Civil War—with its abundance of different rebel groups—is an example of a conflict environment characterized by a high degree of client competition. Other indicators include whether the competing clients can meet sponsor objectives, whether they possess unique or superlative capabilities, and the distance between the sponsor and the other prospective clients in terms of compatibility of

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94 Ariel I. Ahram, *Proxy Warriors: The Rise and Fall of State-Sponsored Militias* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 15; Staniland, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," 21, 29.

95 Staniland, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," 17–21.

96 Staniland, 18.

97 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 604, 607.

98 "It is noticeable that training retains its direction and significance, indicating its favorable effect on rebel coherence and discipline irrespective of the sponsor's capacity." Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937.

objectives and ideology.[99]   This is an important variable because if many clients are competing for support from a sponsor, they are more likely to comply with the sponsor's conditions for supporting them. To use Salehyan's principal-agent theory terminology, multiple clients boost the credibility of a principal's threat of sanctions, reducing the risk of agency-slack.[100] However, Popovic's quantitative analysis shows that the presence of multiple rebel groups actually correlates with defection.[101] Competing organizations may attract clients away from external sponsors.[102] This potentiality aligns with Christia's work on how power dynamics affect the formation of alliances, and with Gordon McCormick and Lindsay Fritz's game-theoretical explanation of "warlord politics."[103] Thus, sponsors practicing effective client management may seek clients among these competing organizations, diversifying their client portfolio to combat agency slack, while preventing defection to groups unaligned with the sponsor. The way in which sponsors react to an environment with multiple non-state armed groups will therefore determine whether they are fostering client competition or leaving themselves vulnerable to competition for the loyalty of their clients.

I.   SPONSOR COMPETITION

If client competition can serve to increase sponsor influence, sponsor competition threatens that influence. The presence of other sponsors allows the client to minimize its dependence on any single sponsor, reduces the credibility of any sanctions the sponsor may threaten, and potentially incentivizes different priorities.[104] Indeed, Salehyan, et al. used quantitative analysis to demonstrate that human rights abuses—one type of agency

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99 This independent variable does not have any associated variables in the NSA data set. The best quantitative measure using these data is checking the number of existing dyads for the same conflict. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Non-State Actors in Civil Wars."

100 Salehyan, "Delegation," 502, 504.

101 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 936–37.

102 Popovic, 935.

103 Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*; Gordon McCormick, and Lindsay Fritz, "The Logic of Warlord Politics," *Third World Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2009): 81–112.

104 Salehyan, "Delegation," 502–3.

slack—are far more likely when multiple sponsors are present.[105] Indicators of sponsor competition include the presence of other sponsors,[106] the ability of other sponsors to provide means of support similar to those provided by the primary sponsor, the ability of other sponsors to provide means of support that the primary sponsor cannot provide, and the distance between the client and the other competing sponsors in terms of ideological and objective compatibility. Popovic's quantitative analysis "indicates that non-state support is a far greater danger for sponsors than the presence of other [state] sponsors." [107] However, neither result was very robust.[108] Despite this finding, examples of sponsor jockeying for influence at the expense of other sponsors abound—such as Libya and Syria supporting al-Muragha's faction of Fatah in 1983, or Syria supporting Tufayli—the anti-Khamenei leader of the 1997–1998 "revolution of the hungry," which fractionalized Lebanese Hezbollah.[109] Therefore, mitigating sponsor competition by sidelining competitors or effectively integrating them and subordinating them is an essential aspect of conducting effective client management.

In a somewhat perverse manner, competition leading to defiance or desertion can occasionally come from within the sponsor state. Popovic's quantitative analysis demonstrates that sponsor states whose populations share a high degree of ethnic affinity with their clients see an increased incidence of defiance and desertion, suggesting that clients whose cause is popular in the sponsor state can play to that state's population or to other power brokers to maintain support, without accepting the sponsor government's conditions.[110] Thus, sponsors practicing effective client management may need to control the perceptions of their clients among populations who share ethnic, ideological or religious ties with the client. They may even need to monitor the perspectives of key

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105 Salehyan, Siroky, and Wood, "Sponsorship and Abuse," 649, 653.

106 The variables rebel.sup, rsupname, rebextpart and transconstsupp from the NSA data set can be used to measure the number of sponsors. Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan, "Codebook for the Non-State Actor Data Set," 6–7.

107 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937.

108 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937–38.

109 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 602–3, 607.

110 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 929, 936–38.

government figures along with advisors or agents working with the clients. Iranian management of Lebanese Hezbollah reflects this challenge. When the less idealistic President Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Khamenei ascended to power in Iran, replacing the arch-revolutionary Khomeini, they had to remove or bypass powerful diplomats, officials and members of the IRGC who preferred supporting the radical al-Tufayli as Hezbollah's leader, as opposed to pragmatists like al-Musawi and Nasrallah.[111] During the Congo Wars in Africa, the partisan politics of support to rebels in neighboring countries were so sharp that state leaders sponsoring clients in neighboring countries often did so to preclude domestic rivals supporting them first or using the lack of support as a political weapon against the regime.[112] The deleterious effects of such situations on effective client management are obvious.

In certain cases, the host state may develop into a rival sponsor. Staniland's description of state collusion and incorporation strategies toward militias suggests a critical turning point in sponsor influence if the militia is a client of an external patron.[113] This could allow the external sponsor to expand influence within the host state's security forces; on the other hand, it could introduce host-state competition for influence over the militia. External sponsors may be able to regulate this relationship by encouraging sponsored militias to modulate their expressed ideology in relation to state threat perceptions.[114]

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111 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 606.

112 Henning Tamm, "The Origins of Transnational Alliances: Rulers, Rebels, and Political Survival in the Congo Wars," *International Security* 41, no. 1 (Summer 2016): 150, 155–61.

113 Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 772, 774–76.

114 Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 776–77.

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III. METHODOLOGY

This study will use both quantitative techniques and detailed analysis of historical case studies to examine the factors of effective client management. The qualitative chapters will seek to analyze the full relationship between all the independent variables and effective client management—the sponsor's ability to shape the client's objectives and ideology while extending the length of the relationship. Even the best quantitative work in the field has been limited in this respect. Popovic only examined defections as his dependent variable—a partial measure of sponsor influence on client objectives, and of durability.[115] Qualitative analysis will enable detailed observation of changes in ideology and objectives. It will also enable long-term examination of effective client management—beyond the limited duration of the civil wars examined by Popovic.[116]

The quantitative portion will build on Milos Popovic's work by modifying the Sponsorship of Rebels (SOR) dataset to include count variables for the number of external sponsors and competing rebel groups in a given target country-year. This will enable more detailed analysis of the impact of sponsor competition and client competition than was possible using SOR's dichotomous variables for the presence of multiple sponsors or clients in a conflict environment.[117] The quantitative section will also merge in further variables, most importantly contiguity.[118] Contiguity is important because client organizational enforcement and an increased incidence of splits in client groups may be more likely when those clients share a border with an external sponsor. This is likely because the increased proximity of external sponsors who are neighbors with their clients should lead to an increased likelihood of blowback if the sponsors lose influence over their client—especially if they are providing sanctuary to the client. Finally, the

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115 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 924–25.

116 Popovic, 931.

117 Popovic, 934, 935.

118 Douglas M. Stinnett et al., "The Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data, Version 3," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 19, no. 2 (2002): 58–66; "Direct Contiguity (v3.2) — Correlates of War," Folder, accessed June 14, 2017, http://cow.dss.ucdavis.edu/data-sets/direct-contiguity.

quantitative section will test whether increased sponsor competition leads to splits in client groups, and to decreased client organizational enforcement and increased client competition. These hypotheses are based on Tamm's assertion that external sponsors exercise significant influence over the cohesion of their clients, and Staniland's claim that multiple sponsors often lead to fragmentation of client organizations.[119] The quantitative chapter will obviously be limited in scope, but will still examine a broader range of cases than the qualitative chapters.

The qualitative chapters will examine the compatibility of sponsor and client objectives at the beginning of each case, then analyze how the sponsor reacted to and manipulated each independent variable over time. It will test whether the independent variables had the hypothesized impact on effective client management. This study will examine Iranian support to the Badr Corps and its various progeny in Iraq, along with Cuban support to Angola's *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA). These cases represent the maximum variance of the key variables. The case studies include sponsors with diverse objectives, ideologies and systems of government, along with clients who began their relationships with different organizational structures, and levels of fighting capacity and survivability. Both case studies include examples of highly competitive environments, situated in different regions of the world. Finally, both cases display significant transition points—moments like insurgent victories, significant setbacks, or the direct entry of third parties to a conflict—enabling assessment of how sponsors dealt with those transitions.

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119 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources"; Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 50.

IV. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION AND HYPOTHESES

Effective client management (ECM) can be studied using multiple techniques.[120] However, quantitative regression analysis of ECM allows the researcher to take a very broad view of the subject matter by studying a large number of cases. This helps mitigate the potential of selection bias typically stemming from a limited number of qualitative case studies. This chapter will use regression analysis to test the theoretical framework for ECM.

Relationship durability is perhaps the most easily discernible indicator of effective client management—sponsors are unable to build and maintain influence if their clients are deserting, and defiant clients seem like obvious indicators of low sponsor influence. For these reasons, I chose to use the same dependent variables that Popovic created for the Sponsorship of Rebels (SOR) dataset: defection (combined instances of defiance and desertion), severe defection (desertion), and mild defection (defiance).[121] These are extremely useful dependent variables to examine when approaching ECM from a quantitative perspective.[122] A more detailed discussion of the variables will be presented in Section B. Data, Methods and Results.

While each element of ECM's theoretical framework is represented by variables that will be tested in this chapter, these variables are not all-encompassing. I selected independent variables that represent the five critical elements of ECM, and introduced controls for other factors that may influence rebel desertion or defiance. However, by taking a broad view, this statistical analysis necessarily misses some nuance and detail. In

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[120] In addition to the combined regression analysis and case study methodology presented in this chapter, principal-agent theory and game theory present ways of looking at ECM from a theoretical perspective. Salehyan, "Delegation."

[121] Though I will use Popovic's defection variable (modified for the target country-year unit of analysis), I will refer to it as Rebel Defiance and Desertion because "defection" has a connotation similar to "desertion." Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 925.

[122] Popovic, 931–32.

some cases, rebel desertion may simply be a reaction to a sponsor that is losing interest: a client could recognize changing sponsor objectives, and desert that sponsor for a more promising patron. While certainly an example of desertion, this may not be an example of poor ECM. Additionally, endogenous factors like poor relationships between rebel leaders, internal restructuring, or loss of rapport between advisors and rebels could impact the incidence of desertion or defiance. These could be considered aspects of client organizational enforcement (COE) and sponsor oversight (SO). Unfortunately, *Rebel Organizational Centralization* and *Advisors*—the independent variables that will stand in for COE and SO—do not take these nuanced factors into account. *Sponsor Count* is a strong variable and a good analog for sponsor competition, but it does not factor in coalitions of sponsors, and it excludes many cases of covert sponsorship—those which have been successfully kept from public knowledge.[123] *Rebel Count* is likewise a good analog for client competition, but it does not measure the relative strength of competing rebel groups. Client dependence (CD) is hard to measure using existing datasets— *Sponsor GDP* and *Sanctuary* touch on aspects of CD, but are far from complete. Finally, a more pressing methodological issue is the fact that the Sponsorship of Rebels (SOR) dataset, which I used to build most of my variables, covers only one type of affiliate: armed rebel groups engaged in civil war. This necessarily leaves ECM with other affiliates unexamined from a quantitative perspective.

1.   Previous Quantitative Research

The most comprehensive statistical work related to ECM is Milos Popovic's "Fragile Proxies."[124] This quantitative study of the factors that lead rebel clients to desert or defy their external sponsors stands alone in terms of quantitative research on the subject. Popovic's accompanying SOR dataset is an impressive coding of every known instance of sponsor defiance or desertion from 1968–2012.[125] Because of its utility, the

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123 Popovic, 930–31.

124 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies."

125 Popovic's replication files are available on his website. Milos Popovic, "Research," Milos Popovic, accessed June 14, 2017, http://milosp.info/research/.

SOR dataset forms the core of the data used in this chapter. In addition to supporting my theoretical framework for ECM, I will present four hypotheses that support my thesis while building on Popovic's work.

While impressive, Popovic's findings in "Fragile Proxies" are also somewhat frustrating. In his full model, many of the independent variables are statistically insignificant—including the presence of multiple sponsors and multiple parties—variables that are analogous to sponsor competition and rebel competition, respectively.[126] While Popovic's more limited modeling does show statistical significance for multiple rebel groups, his hypothesis that "[r]ebels with multiple state sponsors are prone to defection," was unsupported.[127]

The lack of statistically significant support for multiple sponsors as a relevant factor influencing rebel defection in Popovic's work may be due to his reliance on dichotomous variables.[128] This reliance on dichotomous variables may also be responsible for client competition's lack of robustness.[129] By manipulating the SOR dataset into target country-year format, I created count variables for the number of sponsors, number of rebel groups, and number of instances of rebel desertion and defiance.[130] These new variables allowed me to make two new hypotheses, while shifting my focus to the characteristics of the target environment that lead to defiance or desertion.

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126 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937–39.

127 Popovic, 929, 936–37.

128 Popovic, 934, 935.

129 Popovic, 936, 937, 938.

130 I used Rstudio for all data work. The ddply and magic_merge commands were essential in manipulating and reorganizing the data. However, using magic_merge and converting to target country-year led me to simplify some of the data in order to aggregate using target countries. In some cases, this caused me to combine multiple insurgencies. India, for example, is a massive country with multiple conflicts occasionally taking place at the same time in different regions. In my models, each target country-year for India considers all conflict areas together. "RStudio," RStudio (blog), accessed June 14, 2017, https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/.

2.   Hypothesis 1a:

Target environments with higher numbers of external sponsors will have a higher country-year incidence of rebel desertion and defiance.

3.   Hypothesis 1b:

Target environments with higher numbers of rebel groups will have a higher country-year incidence of rebel desertion and defiance.[131]

Even if it proves impossible to go beyond Popovic's findings and demonstrate a direct relationship between sponsor competition and *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*, it may be possible to demonstrate the importance of sponsor competition by showing that higher numbers of external sponsors are associated with changes in *Rebel Organizational Centralization* and with the number of rebel groups operating in a target country. Popovic's work did demonstrate that these factors had a statistically significant relationship with rebel defection.[132] If increased sponsor competition leads to decreased *Rebel Organizational Centralization* or an increased number of rebel groups, it would have a positive, though indirect, relationship with *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*. I theorize that as more external sponsors begin seeking clients in a civil war, their search for affiliates will incentivize decentralization, and eventually lead to splitting and proliferation of rebel groups. This theory provides two more hypotheses.

4.   Hypothesis 2a:

The rebel groups operating in target country-year environments with higher numbers of external sponsors will have a lower average degree of organizational centralization.

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131 The regression analysis in support of this hypothesis did not control for the small subset of cases with one external sponsor supporting multiple rebel groups. For a more detailed discussion of this factor see the conclusion section of this chapter.

132 The presence of multiple rebel groups was, however, not robust to the inclusion of all control variables. Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 936–38.

5. Hypothesis 2b:

Target environments with higher numbers of external sponsors will have a higher country-year count of rebel groups.

B.   DATA, METHODS AND RESULTS

1.   Data

In addition to Popovic's SOR dataset, I also used the Direct Contiguity v3.2 dataset, the Polity IV dataset, and the World Development Indicators dataset.[133] These datasets allowed me to merge additional control variables into the SOR dataset. Popovic's research did not consider the different goals and objectives that sponsors sharing a land border with their target state may have. Based on Tamm's writing, I considered the difference between influence building and regime change strategies to be critical—especially as influence-building sponsors are more likely to meddle with their clients' organizational structures.[134] In trying to control for this difference, I hypothesized that states sharing a direct land border with their target country would be more inclined to meddle with client organizational structure. Therefore, I added a dichotomous control variable for contiguity.

The Polity IV datasets allowed me to use the Polity2 variable to control for the target country's degree of democratization or authoritarianism.[135] Initially, I intended to control for the average Polity2 score of sponsors operating in a given target country-year. I believed that non-democratic states—which are potentially more capable of long-running, covert campaigns with a high degree of continuity due to their closed nature and static leadership—would have a natural advantage over democracies. However, a quick

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[133] Popovic, "Research"; Stinnett et al., "The Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data, Version 3"; "Direct Contiguity (v3.2) — Correlates of War"; "INSCRdata," accessed June 14, 2017, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html; "World Development Indicators | Data," accessed June 14, 2017, http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators.

[134] Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 599–602.

[135] Monty G. Marshall, Ted Roberts Gurr, and Keith Jaggers, "POLITYTM IV PROJECT, Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2015, Dataset Users' Manual," Manual, Center for Systemic Peace, May 19, 2016, 17, http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2015.pdf.

map visualization depicting the average incidence of defection per sponsor (Figure 1) cast doubt on that theory. There are democracies and autocracies with higher rates of defection, while some have lower rates. Instead, I chose to control for the target country's Polity2 score.
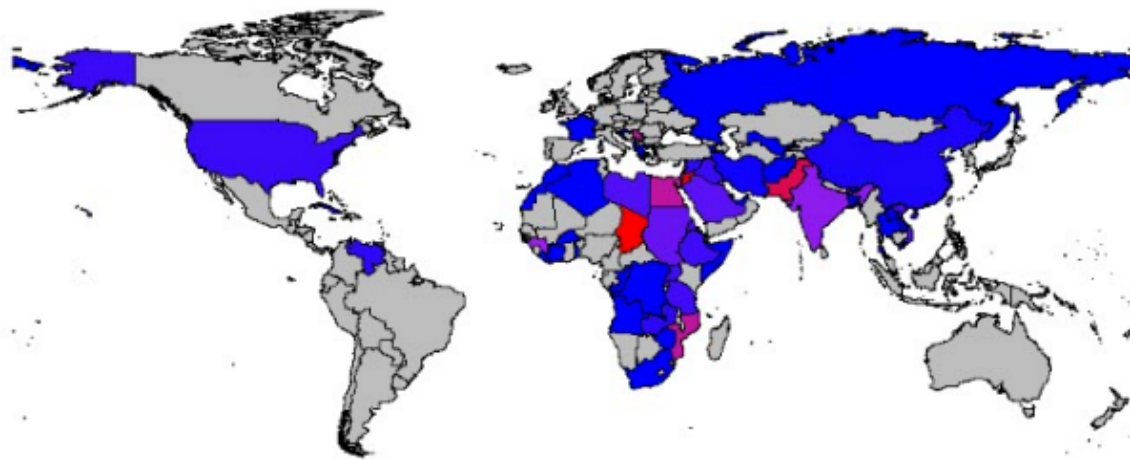
Red indicates sponsors that have suffered a higher average incidence of rebel desertion and defiance.

Figure 1.   Client Defection, 1968–2012.[136]

The World Development Indicators (WDI) dataset allowed me to add control variables for the target country's GDP and population.[137] With these additional variables merged with SOR, and the dataset transformed into target country-year units of analysis, I was able to examine my four hypotheses.

2.   Hypotheses 1a and 1b

The first two hypotheses both deal with complex target environments—those characterized by a large number of sponsor countries or rebel groups. These hypotheses

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136 The map in Figure 1, and all other graphics in this chapter were created using the RStudio program. "RStudio."

137 "World Development Indicators | Data."

state that complex target environments are associated with increased rebel defiance and desertion.

a.   Dependent Variables

There are three dependent variables for Hypotheses 1a and 1b. They are drawn from Popovic's SOR dataset and will be run in three separate models. These variables represent Popovic's two different categories of rebel defection—defiance and desertion—as well as a combination of those two categories. While the combined incidence of defiance and desertion is a strong analog for effective client management, it is also important to measure desertion and defiance independently, as certain independent variables have significant relationships with only one or the other type of defective affiliate activity.[138] Though worrisome, defiance is generally far less damaging to the sponsor's interests than desertion.[139]

Rebel Desertion is the first dependent variable. This is a count variable that measures the total number of rebel desertions in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "severe" variable in the SOR dataset.[140] In SOR, the following rebel actions are coded as desertion: "accepting cease-fire or peace talks with the target government without a sponsor's explicit approval, abandoning fighting, joining the target government, or targeting civilians and/or the armed forces of the sponsor government."[141]

Rebel Defiance is the second dependent variable. This is a count variable that measures the total number of episodes of rebel defiance in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "mild" variable in the SOR dataset.[142] If a rebel group refused to take any of the following actions at the sponsor's behest, Popovic coded it as an incidence of

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138 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937–38.

139 Popovic, 931–32.

140 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 931–32.

141 This quotation was taken from a bulletized list in Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 932.

142 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 931–32.

defiance: "conduct military operations, accept a ceasefire, or sign a peace agreement that is explicitly backed by the sponsor."[143]

Rebel Defiance and Desertion is the third dependent variable. This is a count variable that measures the total number of episodes of rebel desertion or defiance in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "defect" variable in the SOR dataset.[144]

b.   *Independent Variables*

The two independent variables for Hypotheses 1a and 1b are also drawn from the SOR dataset.

Sponsor Count is the first independent variable. This is a count variable that measures the total number of unique external states supporting rebels in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "sponsor" variable in the SOR dataset.[145] This variable was heavy-tailed so I logistically transformed it.

Rebel Count is the second independent variable. This is a count variable that measures the total number of rebel groups operating in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "rebel" variable in the SOR dataset.[146] This variable was also heavy-tailed so I logistically transformed it.

c.   *Control Variables*

The models for the first two hypotheses include a number of control variables:

Advisors is a continuous variable running between zero and one. It measures the proportion of sponsor-rebel dyads in which the sponsor supported the rebel group with advisors or trainers in a given target country-year. It is created by taking a target country-

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143 This quotation was taken from a bulletized list in Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 932.

144 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 931–32.

145 Popovic, "Research."

146 Popovic.

year average of the "supt" variable in the SOR dataset.[147] "Supt" is a dichotomous variable that measures whether or not a sponsor country supported a rebel group with embedded advisors or trainers.[148]

Sanctuary is a continuous variable running between zero and one. It measures the proportion of sponsor-rebel dyads in which the sponsor provided the rebel group with sanctuary in a given target country-year. It is drawn from a target country-year average of the dichotomous "supps" variable in the SOR dataset.[149] "Supps" is a dichotomous variable that measures whether or not a sponsor country provided sanctuary to a rebel group.[150]

Organizational Centralization is a continuous variable running between the values of one and three. It measures the average degree of organizational centralization of all the rebel groups operating in a given target country-year. It is calculated using the "orgstr" variable in the SOR dataset.[151]

Contiguity is a continuous variable running between zero and one. It measures the proportion of sponsor-rebel dyads with contiguous sponsors in a given target country-year. This variable is an average of the sum of the contiguity scores for all the sponsors supporting rebels in a given target country-year. These scores were averaged after merging the Direct Contiguity v3.2 dataset with the SOR dataset, and creating a dichotomous contiguity variable for each sponsor.[152]

Ethnic Ties is a continuous variable running between zero and one. It measures the proportion of sponsor-rebel dyads in which the sponsor shared ethnic ties with the

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147 Popovic; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935.

148 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935. Unfortunately, SOR does not provide more detailed coding for advisor activities or effectiveness.

149 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935.

150 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935.

151 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 932–33.

152 Stinnett et al., "The Correlates of War Project Direct Contiguity Data, Version 3"; "Direct Contiguity (v3.2) — Correlates of War."

rebel group in a given target country-year. This is drawn from a target country-year average of the dichotomous "ethties" variable in the SOR dataset.[153]

Ideological Ties is a continuous variable running between zero and one. It measures the proportion of sponsor-rebel dyads in which the sponsor government shared ideological ties with the rebel group in a given target country-year. This is drawn from a target country-year average of the dichotomous "ideol" variable in the SOR dataset.[154] To code his "ideol" variable Popovic drew information from the START project and the Database of Political Institutions 2012 to compare rebel ideology with sponsor government ideology.[155]

Sponsor GDP is a measure of the average GDP of all sponsors supporting rebel groups in a given target country-year. It is drawn from the "spgdp" variable in the SOR dataset.[156]

Intensity is a measure of the intensity of the conflict occurring in a given target country-year. Intensity is taken from the "intens" variable in the SOR dataset.[157] "Intens" is drawn from the UCDP's measurements for conflict intensity: any target country-year with over 1,000 battle deaths is coded as a 2, any target country-year with 25–999 battle deaths is coded as a 1, and any target country-year with less than 25 battle deaths is coded as a 0.[158]

GDP is a measure of the target country's gross domestic product in a given target-year. It is drawn from the WDI dataset.[159] This variable was heavy-tailed so I logistically transformed it.

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153 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 933–34.

154 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 934.

155 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 934.

156 Popovic, 934.

157 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935.

158 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 935.

159 "World Development Indicators | Data."

Population is the target country's population in a given target-year. It is drawn from the WDI dataset.[160] This variable was heavy-tailed so I logistically transformed it.

Democracy is a measure of the relative democratization of a target country in a given target country-year. The scale of scores runs from -10 to 10, with higher numbers indicating more democratic political systems. Democracy is based on Polity2 scores, which are drawn from the Polity IV dataset.[161]

d. Regression Analysis

I used negative binomial regression for all of the models testing Hypotheses 1a and 1b. Negative binomial regression is commonly used with dependent variables (like *Rebel Desertion, Rebel Defiance* and combinations of the two) that are counts—the values are always positive integers. These negative binomial regression models estimate the relationship between each of the independent variables (as well as control variables), and rates of defiance and desertion. All independent variables were lagged by one year to guard against reversion causation.

In summary, I assessed three similar dependent variables drawn from the SOR dataset. All three measure the incidence of negative events (desertion and defiance) that often occur in the course of sponsor-client interaction. I examined the impact of two independent variables—counts of sponsors and rebel groups active in a given target environment—on those dependent variables, while introducing control variables drawn from the SOR, Direct Contiguity v3.2, Polity IV and WDI datasets.

e. Results

The results for the regression models used to test Hypotheses 1a and 1b are displayed in Table 1. Models 1, 4 and 7 are baseline models without target country-level control variables. Models 2, 5 and 8 introduce target country-level control variables for

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160 "World Development Indicators | Data."

161 "INSCRdata"; Marshall, Gurr, and Jaggers, "POLITYTM IV PROJECT, Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800–2015, Dataset Users' Manual," 17.

each dependent variable. Models 3, 6 and 9 take a different approach to target country-level control variables. These three models include fixed effects by target country. As displayed at the bottom of the regression table, the models without target country-level control variables or fixed effects received lower Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) scores.[162] This indicates that they are more accurate than those run with the additional variables or with fixed effects. AIC scores are useful tools for evaluating regression models—especially negative binomial models, which cannot be evaluated using Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curves.

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162 Hirotugu Akaike, "A New Look at the Statistical Model Identification," *IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control* 19 (1974): 716–23.

Table 1.   Hypotheses 1a and 1b

Table 1 - Rebel Defection

	Dependent variable:								
	Rebel Desertions and Defiance			Rebel Desertions			Rebel Defiance		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Sponsor Count(log)	0.902*	1.006*	1.156*	0.697	0.832	1.077	1.162	1.390	0.937
	(0.521)	(0.554)	(0.644)	(0.641)	(0.685)	(0.746)	(0.862)	(0.940)	(1.225)
Rebel Count(log)	1.294***	1.248***	0.629	1.015**	0.939*	0.788	1.891***	1.948***	1.203
	(0.360)	(0.386)	(0.449)	(0.453)	(0.492)	(0.602)	(0.605)	(0.648)	(0.762)
Rebel Org. Cent.	-0.477**	-0.524**	-0.547*	-0.694***	-0.813***	-0.625*	0.044	0.054	-0.673
	(0.225)	(0.235)	(0.299)	(0.268)	(0.287)	(0.345)	(0.437)	(0.447)	(0.649)
Contiguity	1.036	0.830	-0.604	0.715	0.310	-1.376	1.437	1.438	-0.202
	(0.633)	(0.669)	(0.845)	(0.764)	(0.843)	(1.111)	(1.081)	(1.123)	(1.532)
Advisors	-0.645	-0.422	-0.440	-1.203*	-1.055	-0.789	-0.196	0.082	-0.240
	(0.491)	(0.521)	(0.752)	(0.665)	(0.684)	(0.963)	(0.778)	(0.882)	(1.297)
Sanctuary	-0.193	-0.086	0.842	0.065	0.119	1.232*	-0.460	-0.116	0.954
	(0.467)	(0.505)	(0.577)	(0.583)	(0.641)	(0.716)	(0.782)	(0.857)	(1.071)
Ethnic Ties	0.504	0.310	0.279	0.528	0.066	0.144	0.598	0.621	0.065
	(0.405)	(0.483)	(0.927)	(0.508)	(0.644)	(1.144)	(0.645)	(0.769)	(1.609)
Ideological Ties	-0.517	-0.650	-1.300**	-0.498	-0.618	-1.438*	-0.517	-0.757	-1.644
	(0.392)	(0.423)	(0.610)	(0.478)	(0.520)	(0.763)	(0.680)	(0.737)	(1.098)
Sponsor GDP	-0.098	-0.101	-0.130	-0.304	-0.377*	-0.136	0.248	0.347	-0.041
	(0.172)	(0.183)	(0.275)	(0.209)	(0.221)	(0.324)	(0.306)	(0.337)	(0.536)
Intensity	-0.392	-0.415	-0.098	-0.030	-0.089	0.490	-1.224*	-1.333*	-1.480*
	(0.352)	(0.358)	(0.451)	(0.427)	(0.438)	(0.540)	(0.664)	(0.690)	(0.879)
GDP(log)		-0.047			-0.250			0.244	
		(0.238)			(0.300)			(0.404)	
Population(log)		0.049			-0.042			0.259	
		(0.143)			(0.173)			(0.258)	
Democracy		0.516			1.317*			-0.496	
		(0.574)			(0.734)			(0.974)	
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Observations	403	403	403	403	403	403	403	403	403
Log Likelihood	-172.560	-171.637	-152.389	-121.910	-120.070	-103.555	-86.856	-86.255	-75.063
Akaike Inf. Crit.	367.121	371.274	404.777	265.820	268.140	307.110	195.711	200.511	250.126

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The coefficients and standard errors from Models 1, 4 and 7 are displayed in Figure 2. Red bars represent effects on *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*. Blue bars represent effects on *Rebel Desertion* and green bars represent effects on *Rebel Defiance*. Each bar's width represents the 95% confidence interval for the coefficient.
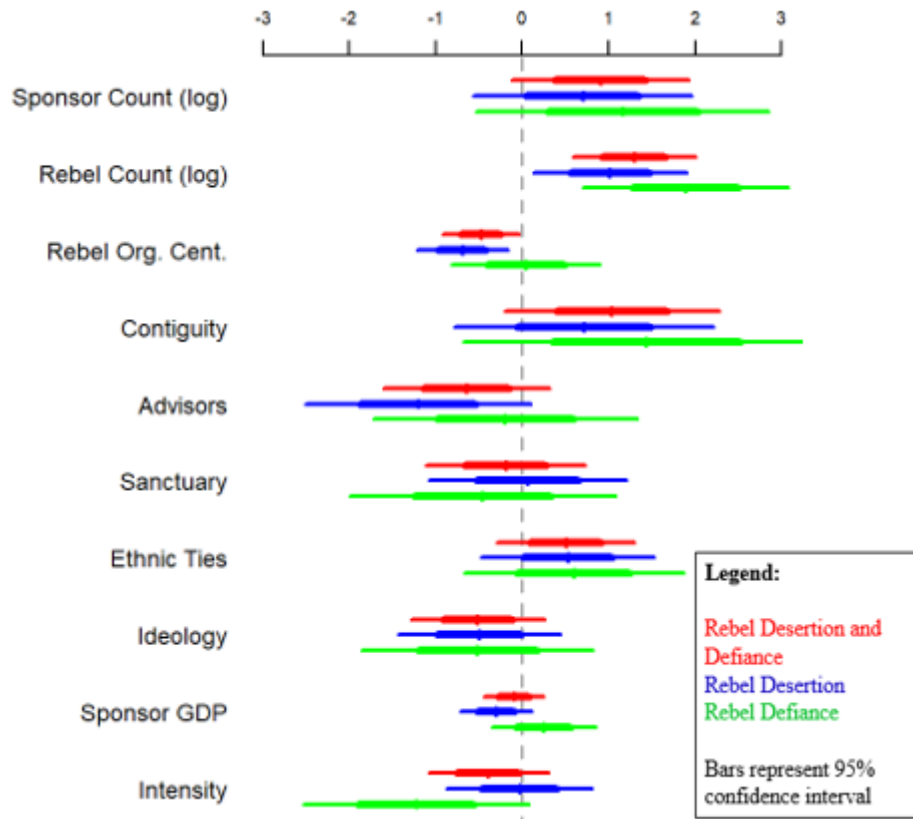
Figure 2.   Coefficient Plot—Rebel Defiance and Desertion

The results displayed in the coefficient plot in Figure 2 demonstrate limited support for Hypothesis 1a. The regression coefficient for S*ponsor Count* is positive in its relationship with all three measures of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*. However, at the standard 95% confidence interval, *Sponsor Count's* regression coefficient is not statistically significant in any of the relationships (though it does meet the 90% confidence interval for the combined count of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*). A look at Models 2 and 3 in Table 1 shows that this relationship is robust to the inclusion of either target country-level control variables or target country fixed effects.

In addition to displaying moderate statistical significance (90%) in its relationship with the combined count of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*, the effect of *Sponsor Count* also displays strong substantive significance. The relationship depicted in Figure 3 is drawn from the first model in the regression table. This model used the combined count of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* as the dependent variable. As can be seen in Figure 3,

shifting *Sponsor Count* from its minimum value to its maximum value increases the expected rate of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* by over 200%.
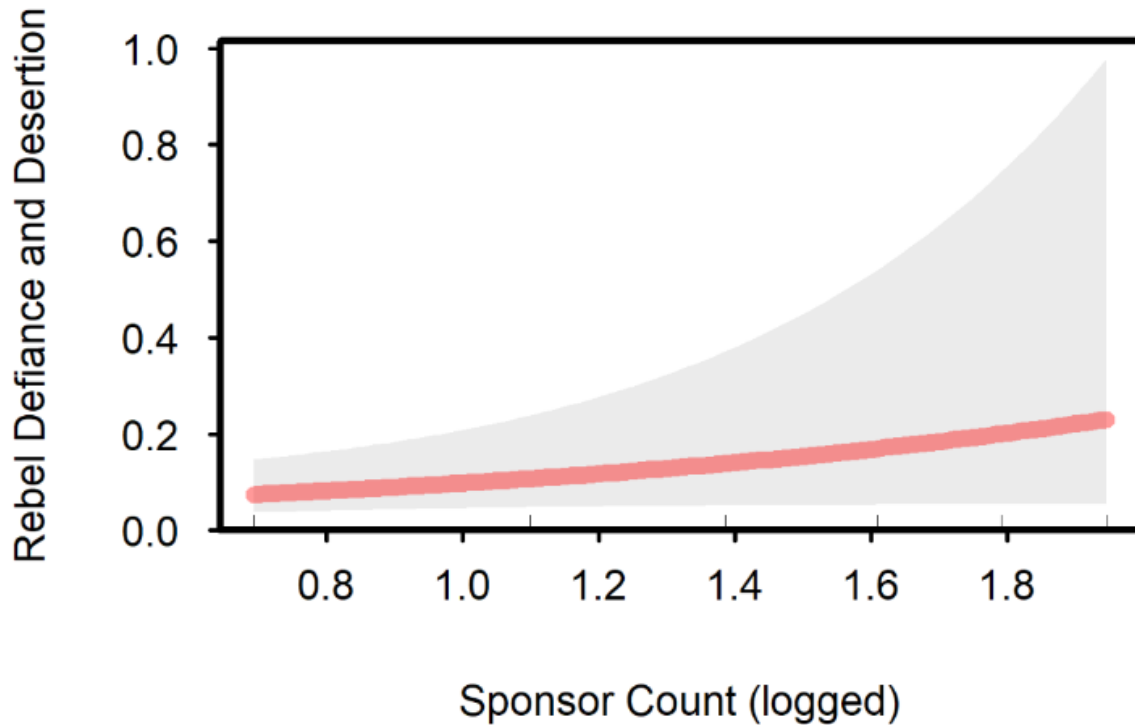
Figure 3.   Sponsor Count's Effect on Rebel Defiance and Desertion

Hypothesis 1b received much stronger support from the regression models. The regression coefficient of *Rebel Count* (reported in Table 1) is statistically significant in its relationship with all three measures of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*. Additionally, its substantive effect is stronger than that of *Sponsor Count*. As can be seen in Figure 4, shifting *Rebel Count* from its minimum value to its maximum value increases the expected rate of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* by over 800%.
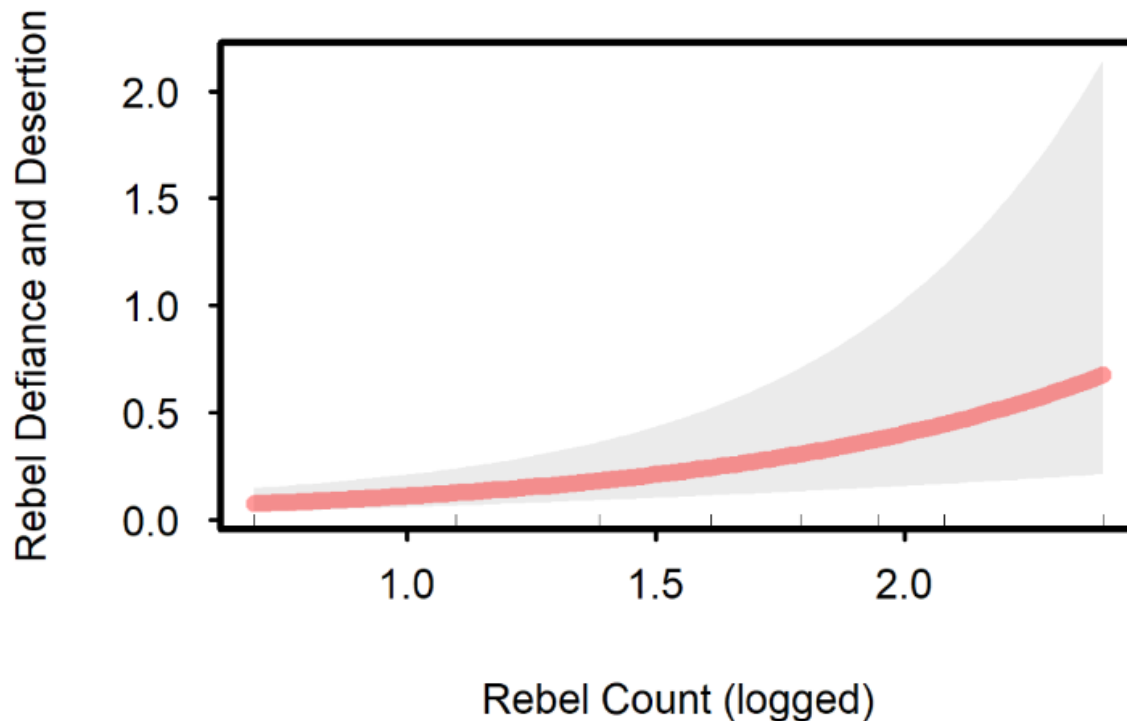
Figure 4.   Rebel Count's Effect on Rebel Defiance and Desertion

The results of this first set of models provide limited support for Hypothesis 1a and much stronger support for Hypothesis 1b. Likewise, the results give limited support for the inclusion of sponsor competition as an independent variable in the thesis' overarching model of effective client management's critical factors, but much stronger support for client competition.[163] Additionally, the statistically significant negative regression coefficients for *Rebel Organizational Centralization* with respect to *Rebel Desertion* and *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* attest to that variable's continued importance, and support the use of COE in my theoretical framework.[164] Finally, inclusion of sponsor oversight as one of ECM's critical factors receives very limited

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163 Popovic's findings regarding the impact of multiple sponsors and multiple rebel groups on the incidence of rebel defiance or desertion were not statistically significant. However, the models here display Rebel Count's statistical significance using the target country-year unit of analysis, which is different from Popovic's research. Popovic's models also suggested that rebel count ("Multiparty") is a very important variable. Popovic, 936–38.

164 Popovic also cited the importance of rebel organization in "Fragile Proxies." Popovic, 937–38.

support, with the regression coefficient for *Advisors* displaying a negative relationship with *Rebel Desertion* at the 90% confidence interval.[165]

3.   Hypotheses 2a and 2b

The second two hypotheses attempt to elaborate the importance of sponsor competition by testing whether increased numbers of external sponsors will lead to decreased *Rebel Organizational Centralization* (2a), and to increased *Rebel Count* (2b) within a given target country-year. Despite *Sponsor Count's* relatively weak (in statistical terms) relationship with the dependent variables in the previous set of models, I believe that it may also have an indirect relationship with *Rebel Defiance and Desertion,* and thus with effective client management. In the previous set of models, we saw that the regression coefficients for *Rebel Organizational Centralization* and *Rebel Count* displayed significant relationships with rates of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*, indicating the importance of understanding the underlying causes of these factors.[166]

a.   *Dependent Variables*

There are two dependent variables for Hypotheses 2a and 2b. They are drawn from the SOR dataset and will be run in two separate models. Both dependent variables were used as control variables in the previous set of models. They are: **Rebel Organizational Centralization** and **Rebel Count**.

b.   *Independent Variable*

Sponsor Count is the main independent variable for the second set of models. It is measured in the same way as in the first set of models.

c.   *Control Variables*

The models for the second two hypotheses were run with all of the same control variables from the first set of models. *Rebel Count* was used as a control variable for the

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165 Popovic also found his "supt" variable to have a negative impact on desertion and defiance, but did not demonstrate statistical significance for that finding in the full model. Popovic, 936–38.

166 These were also cited by Popovic as important variables. Popovic, 936–38.

model in which *Rebel Organizational Centralization* is the dependent variable, and *Rebel Organizational Centralization* was used as a control variable for the model in which *Rebel Count* is the dependent variable.

d.   Regression Analysis

I used linear regression to model Hypothesis 2a, as it is based on a continuous dependent variable. Because *Rebel Count*—the dependent variable in Hypothesis 2b—is a count variable, I used a negative binomial regression model to test Hypothesis 2b. All independent variables were again lagged by one year to guard against reversion causation.

In summary, I assessed the relationships between *Sponsor Count* and *Rebel Organizational Centralization*, and between *Sponsor Count* and *Rebel Count*, while controlling for multiple variables drawn from the SOR, Direct Contiguity v3.2, Polity IV and WDI datasets.

e.   Results

The results for the regression models used to test Hypotheses 2a and 2b are displayed in Table 2. Models 1 and 4 are baseline models without target country-level control variables. Models 2 and 5 introduce target country-level control variables for each dependent variable. Models 3 and 6 include fixed effects by target country. As displayed at the bottom of the regression table, the models with target country fixed effects each received lower Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) scores.[167] This indicates that they are more accurate than the baseline models or those run with explicit country-level control variables.

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167 Hirotugu Akaike, "A New Look at the Statistical Model Identification," *IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control* 19 (1974): 716–23.

Table 2.   Hypotheses 2a and 2b

Table 2 - Org. Centralization and Rebel Proliferation

	Dependent variable:					
	Rebel Org. Cent.			Rebel Count		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Sponsor Count(log)	0.074	-0.024	0.279**	1.167***	1.197***	0.835***
	(0.121)	(0.121)	(0.126)	(0.108)	(0.110)	(0.162)
Rebel Count(log)	-0.040	0.113	0.208*			
	(0.107)	(0.111)	(0.114)			
Rebel Org. Cent.				-0.068	-0.005	-0.032
				(0.061)	(0.065)	(0.093)
Contiguity	-0.105	-0.015	-0.212	0.676***	0.346**	-0.017
	(0.104)	(0.105)	(0.164)	(0.134)	(0.147)	(0.270)
Advisors	0.444***	0.545***	0.104	-0.367***	-0.263**	0.190
	(0.090)	(0.093)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.126)	(0.200)
Sanctuary	0.385***	0.393***	0.531***	-0.448***	-0.279**	0.113
	(0.093)	(0.091)	(0.102)	(0.121)	(0.127)	(0.181)
Ethnic Ties	0.297***	0.104	-0.353*	-0.094	0.082	0.002
	(0.095)	(0.100)	(0.192)	(0.120)	(0.129)	(0.288)
Ideological Ties	0.114	0.001	-0.172	0.126	0.124	-0.442**
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.118)	(0.103)	(0.106)	(0.184)
Sponsor GDP	-0.096***	-0.109***	-0.230***	0.020	0.063	-0.069
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.047)	(0.079)
Intensity	0.156**	0.215***	-0.111	0.146*	0.037	0.221*
	(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.088)	(0.090)	(0.118)
GDP(log)		0.259***			-0.261***	
		(0.050)			(0.061)	
Population(log)		0.022			0.119***	
		(0.033)			(0.039)	
Democracy		-0.205*			0.316**	
		(0.109)			(0.142)	
Fixed Effects	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
Observations	403	403	403	403	403	403
Log Likelihood	-403.407	-388.077	-265.974	-568.713	-552.180	-502.017
Akaike Inf. Crit.	826.814	802.153	629.947	1,157.427	1,130.360	1,102.034

Note: *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The coefficients and standard errors from Models 3 and 6 are displayed in Figure 5. Each bar's width represents the 95% confidence interval of the effect.
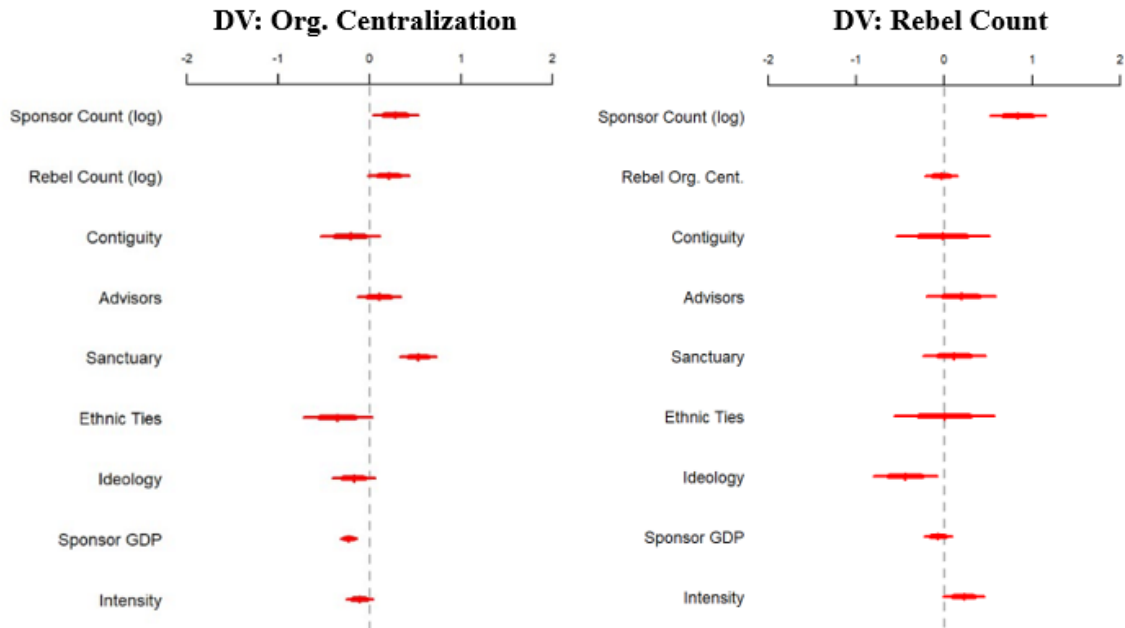
Figure 5.   Coefficient Plots—Rebel Organizational Centralization and Rebel Count

The results displayed in Figure 5 demonstrate support for Hypothesis 2b, but not Hypothesis 2a. The regression coefficient for *Sponsor Count* is statistically significant in its relationship with *Rebel Organizational Centralization*, and with *Rebel Count*. However, the statistically significant relationship between *Sponsor Count* and *Rebel Organizational Centralization* is positive, not negative as predicted in Hypothesis 2a. This unexpected outcome may be due to centralized rebel groups' status as more attractive clients for external sponsors. When multiple sponsors are involved in a conflict, it could provoke increased competition between rebel groups for those sponsors' resources—incentivizing organizational centralization. Alternatively, this counterintuitive result may be due to deliberate actions taken by external sponsors who recognize the relationship between increased *Sponsor Count* and an increased likelihood of *Rebel Defiance* or *Rebel Desertion*. Sponsors operating in target environments characterized by high sponsor competition may be seeking to prevent defiance and desertion by making their clients more centralized and cohesive—leveraging *Rebel Organizational Centralization's* negative relationship with *Rebel Desertion and Defiance* to offset the impact of sponsor competition. The positive relationship between *Advisors* and *Rebel*

Organizational Centralization lends credence to this theory, though the relationship's statistical significance is not robust to the inclusion of fixed effects.

Interestingly, the regression coefficients for two control variables—*Sanctuary*, and *Sponsor GDP*—display statistically significant relationships with *Rebel Organizational Centralization*. The statistically significant regression coefficient for *Sanctuary*, along with the less robust results for *Advisors*, also suggest factors that practitioners of ECM should seek to understand and leverage when attempting to sponsor cohesive (and thus hopefully compliant) clients.

Sponsor GDP's negative regression coefficient may be explained by the "resource curse" described by Jeremy Weinstein—in which rebel groups that receive external support are adversely impacted by that support.[168] This situation may be exacerbated by richer sponsors with more largesse to bestow on their affiliates. Another implication of Sponsor GDP's negative regression coefficient is that wealth is not necessarily a prerequisite for sponsoring tightly organized clients.

The regression coefficient for *Sponsor Count* (displayed in Figure 5) is also statistically significant in its relationship with *Rebel Organizational Centralization*. However, the results displayed in Figure 6 show limited substantive significance for this effect. As can be seen in Figure 6, shifting *Sponsor Count* from its minimum value to its maximum value increases the expected rate of *Rebel Organizational Centralization* by approximately 10%.

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168 Weinstein, "Rebel Recruitment," Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 228.
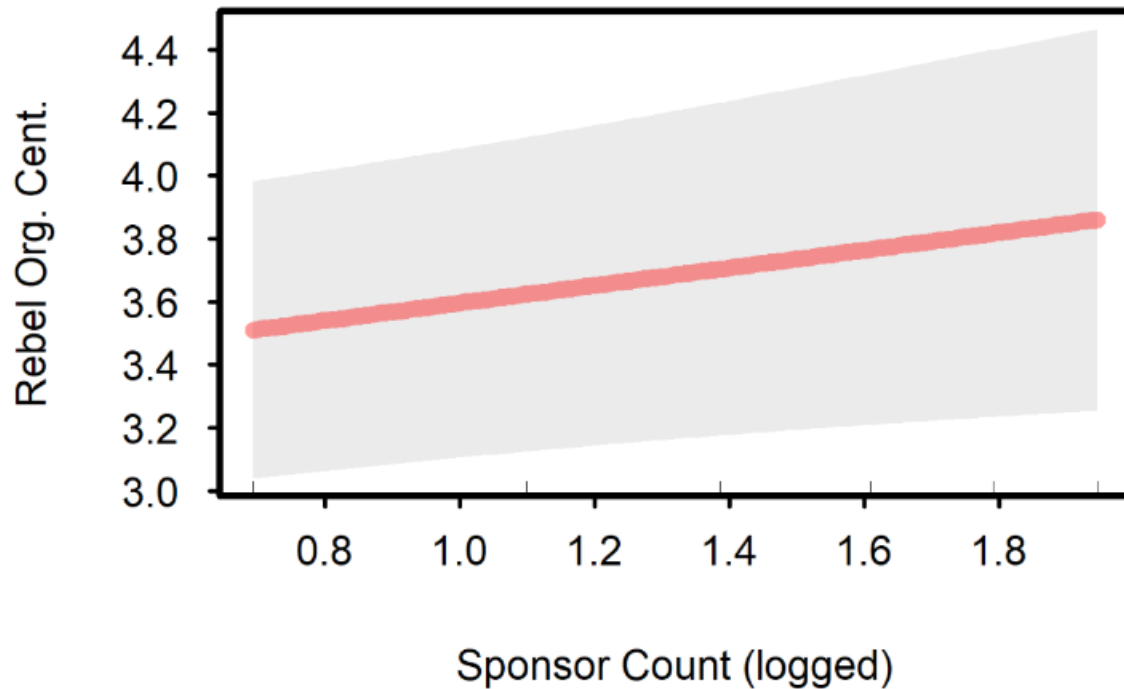
Figure 6.   Sponsor Count's Effect on Rebel Organizational Centralization

Sponsors seeking to foster centralized clients may expect to have positive effects on *Rebel Organizational Centralization* by providing their affiliates with sanctuary or advisors. The substantively significant relationship between *Sanctuary* and *Rebel Organizational Centralization* is shown in Figure 7. As can be seen in Figure 7, shifting *Sanctuary* from its minimum value to its maximum value increases the expected rate of *Rebel Organizational Centralization* by approximately 16%. The positive relationship between *Rebel Organizational Centralization* and *Sanctuary* is very intuitive. With sanctuary, rebel groups can organize much more openly and efficiently than they can in target countries—where they are often forced underground to avoid the attention of the target government's security forces.[169] Though the results for *Advisors* were not robust to the inclusion of fixed effects, the positive relationship between *Advisors* and *Rebel*

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169 J. Bowyer Bell, "Revolutionary Dynamics: The Inherent Inefficiency of the Underground," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2, no. 2 (1990): 193–211; J. Bowyer Bell, "Aspects of the Dragonworld: Covert Communications and the Rebel Ecosystem," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 3, no. 1 (1989): 15–43.

Organizational Centralization is likewise intuitive. Military advisors, inculcated in a culture that emphasizes accountability and chain of command, usually seek to enhance the organizational structure of their partners.
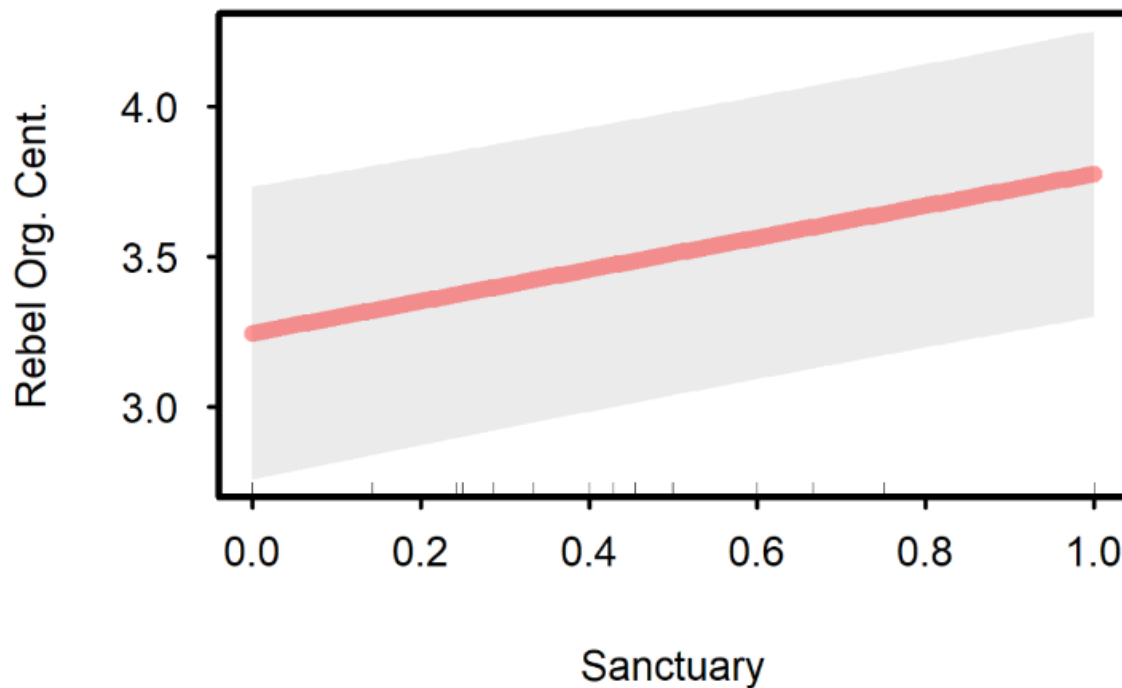
Figure 7. Sanctuary's Effect on Rebel Organizational Centralization

The results displayed in Figure 8 refer back to Hypothesis 2b and are drawn from the second model depicted in Figure 5. The substantive effect of *Sponsor Count* on the expected *Rebel Count* is displayed in Figure 8. As can be seen in Figure 8, shifting *Sponsor Count* from its minimum value to its maximum value increases the expected rate of *Rebel Count* by approximately 185%. This indicates that additional external sponsors incentivize the creation of new rebel groups. The mechanism for this proliferation of rebels could be splitting from extant groups, or the synthesis of new groups from previously uncommitted populations. Both of these mechanisms are potentially sub-optimal for an external sponsor with preexisting commitments in a conflict. Such a sponsor could see the combat power of its affiliates sapped by splits, and could also see increased competition for new recruits. Alternatively, a new sponsor may choose to take

advantage of this dynamic to build influence in a conflict environment by splitting its own partisans away from extant groups aligned with competitors, or by recruiting new, loyal affiliates. This finding reinforces the need for external sponsors to manage sponsor competition—by synchronizing the efforts of allied sponsors, or by blocking or subverting the efforts of rival sponsors.
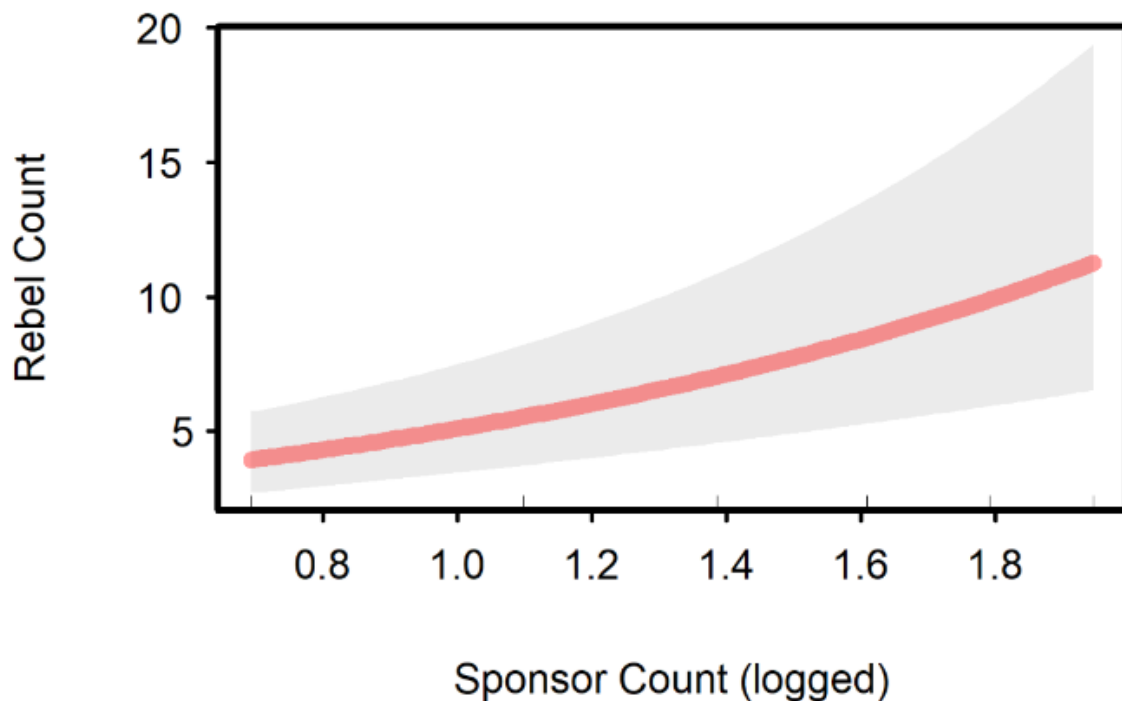
Figure 8.   Sponsor Count's Effect on Rebel Count

C.   CONCLUSION

The relationships highlighted in this chapter between *Rebel Count, Rebel Organizational Centralization,* and (less significantly) *Sponsor Count* as independent variables, and *Rebel Desertion, Rebel Defiance* and their combined count as dependent variables lend support to the hypothesized impact of client competition, client organizational enforcement and (to a lesser degree) sponsor competition on effective client management. Interestingly, the quantitative analysis of client competition indicates that increased numbers of rebel groups in a target environment are associated with an

increased incidence of defiance and desertion. The literature review revealed disagreement on this subject—with principal-agent theorists suggesting that increased client competition would lead to a higher degree of compliance, and Popovic's quantitative work suggesting that increased numbers of rebels would lead to more desertion and defiance.[170] Works on alliance formation—like those by Christia, and McCormick and Fritz—suggest a power-based alternative: perhaps rebel groups abandon external sponsors to team with other, more powerful rebel groups.[171] The analysis of Iran's support to Badr and its numerous progeny, presented in the next chapter, demonstrates that a broad spectrum of many client groups may actually be useful in preventing client defiance and desertion. Perhaps the disconnect is in the variables themselves. Popovic's multiparty variable and my *Rebel Count* variable referred to any and all externally sponsored rebel groups operating in a target country—not just clients of a single sponsor. Future research should attempt to refine the variables, perhaps showing the percentage of rebel groups that are clients of the same sponsor. This may be easier to do using the sponsor-year unit of analysis. Additionally, researchers should seek to control for the relative balance of power among competing rebel groups. For example, a target environment in which all rebel groups are relatively equal in strength would likely see vastly different patterns of defiance and desertion than one in which a single rebel group was more powerful than any others.[172] Introducing control variables for relative rebel strength could provide quantitative support to the arguments advanced by Christia, and McCormick and Fritz.

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170 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 936–38; Salehyan, "Delegation," 502, 504.

171 Christia, *Alliance Formation in Civil Wars*; McCormick, and Fritz, "The Logic of Warlord Politics."

172 The embarrassing 2015 episode in which U.S.-backed Syrian rebels gave weapons to Jabhat al-Nusra would seem to be a solid example of an incident of defiance provoked by an imbalance of power between rebel groups. Bradford Richardson, "US-Trained Syrian Rebels Gave Weapons to Al Qaeda, Pentagon Admits," *The Hill*, September 26, 2015, http://thehill.com/policy/defense/255055-us-trained-syrian-rebels-gave-weapons-to-al-qaeda-pentagon-admits; Yeganeh Torbati, "U.S.-Trained Syrian Rebels Gave Equipment to Nusra: U.S. Military," *Reuters*, September 26, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-usa-equipment-idUSKCN0RP2HO20150926; Nabih Bulos, "US-Trained Division 30 Rebels 'Betray U.S. and Hand Weapons over to Al-Qaeda's Affiliate in Syria,'" *The Telegraph*, September 22, 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11882195/US-trained-Division-30-rebels-betrayed-US-and-hand-weapons-over-to-al-Qaedas-affiliate-in-Syria.html.

While my quantitative analysis supports the importance of client competition, client organizational enforcement and (to a lesser degree) sponsor competition as factors in effective client management, it leaves client dependence relatively unexamined, and sponsor oversight relatively unsupported. Popovic's variables for sponsor GDP and provision of sanctuary provide a measure of insight into client dependence.[173] However, these variables only touch on certain aspects of the relationship. Sanctuary is usually a strong indicator of dependence. However, relatively independent rebel groups may forcefully use the territory of weak neighbors as sanctuary—in these cases, there is likely a low degree of client dependence. This may be why the regression coefficient for the effect of *Sanctuary* was statistically insignificant in the first set of models. A full examination of client dependence will therefore require careful qualitative analysis.

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173 Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 934, 935.

V.   CASE STUDY 1: IRAN AND SCIRI/BADR

A.   INTRODUCTION

In 1982, Iran formed the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) from exiled Shia clerics and politicians fleeing Saddam Hussein's brutal repression in their home country.[174] The following year, the Iranians organized SCIRI's military wing, the Badr Brigades (later the Badr Corps), to fight alongside Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) units in the Iran-Iraq War.[175] Badr veterans would go on to lead a spectrum of other Iranian affiliates such as the al-Sheibani facilitation network and *Kataib Hezbollah* during the American occupation of Iraq, and *Saray al-Aqidah* and other IRGC-backed militias with Assad in Syria, and later with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq.[176]

This is an impressive record. From 1982 until 2017, a span of 35 years, the IRGC has supported its objectives, and extended Iranian influence in Iraq and beyond through a network of clients that began with SCIRI and the Badr Corps.[177] The Iranians built and maintained compatibility with their clients over a long period of time (a period which shows no sign of stopping) using many of the tools of effective client management (ECM). The IRGC and its Iraqi affiliates certainly started out with a high degree of compatibility of both objectives and ideology, but many of those factors changed over time.[178]

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174 "Shiite Politics," 2–3, Afshon Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam: Religion, Politics, and Iran's Revolutionary Guards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 111; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 56.

175 "Shiite Politics," 3–4; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57.

176 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 21, 24; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14–15; Joel Rayburn*, Iraq After America: Strongmen, Sectarians, Resistance* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2014), 187.

177 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam,* 173–74, 239; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 7, 37–38.

178 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 55–68.

To maintain compatibility over time, the IRGC leveraged every aspect of ECM. SCIRI and Badr manifested high levels of client dependence early in their existence.[179] Later on, the IRGC seized opportunities to create dependence. This early dependence allowed the IRGC to exercise a high degree of sponsor oversight. The IRGC took advantage of tight initial control to build lasting personal relationships, enabling the IRGC to support trusted individuals when they formed new organizations, or took the reins of existing organizations.[180] When training Iraqi clients, the IRGC and its occasional proxy trainers from Lebanese Hezbollah (LH) incorporated sectarian ideology—increasing ideological compatibility.[181] In SCIRI and Badr, the IRGC created a political and military movement with a high degree of client organizational enforcement, especially when compared to its rivals in post- Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Iraq, like the Sadrists.[182] Client competition was a consistent aspect of this environment. During the Saddam era, the IRGC had extremely limited success coalescing the efforts of the various Shiite exile groups.[183] However, after OIF the IRGC had an amazing amount of success working in the opposite direction: sponsoring a broad spectrum of occasionally competing clients.[184] Some of these affiliates were drawn from Badr factions, others from political parties and militias that were occasionally rivals of SCIRI and Badr, but even when these clients were actively fighting each other, they were usually serving the IRGC's interests.[185] Competing external sponsors never fully succeeded in peeling away SCIRI, Badr or any of their progeny from IRGC sponsorship; however, SCIRI did eventually distance itself from Iran in order to appeal to Iraqi voters.[186]

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179 Garrison, 55–57.

180 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 226.

181 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 66–69, 84.

182 "Shiite Politics," 22; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 34–35.

183 "Shiite Politics," 3.

184 Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 187–88; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

185 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 46–47.

186 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 63–65.

Understanding how the IRGC used effective client management, and what aspects were most successful, requires briefly examining the IRGC itself, and its unique capabilities, then analyzing each phase of the relationship between the IRGC and its affiliates. Particular attention must be paid to the transition points between these phases.

The IRGC grew out of the chaos of the 1979 Revolution in Iran.[187] Khomeini's clerical faction—though powerful—was but one of many competing political parties and militias that worked together to bring down Shah Reza Pahlavi.[188] The Islamists—including militias like the Mujahidin of the Islamic Republic (MIR) umbrella organization—who were more religious and conservative, faced rivals, both in the provisional government and on the streets, where powerful militias like the Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) and other leftists were still active.[189] When Khomeini and the Revolutionary Council created the IRGC they incorporated many of the Islamist militias, building an official organization designed to defend the revolutionary theocratic system, and to exert Khomeinist control over revolutionary Iran.[190] The IRGC's present autonomous status—outside the Iranian military structure, and reporting directly to the Supreme Leader—has its roots in this early rivalry between the provisional government (which officially controlled the shells of the police and military), and Khomeini's Revolutionary Council.[191] The IRGC's valorous but costly human-wave attacks during the Iran-Iraq War bought the organization increased bureaucratic power as IRGC units achieved victories at Abadan and Khorramshahr where the regular army had failed.[192] The IRGC's close relationship with the Supreme Leader grew further after Ali Khamenei succeeded Khomeini. Lacking Khomeini's religious credentials, Khamenei leaned on the

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187 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 16.

188 Ostovar, 38–43.

189 Ostovar, 42, 47–54; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 16.

190 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 15; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 43–48.

191 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 5, 42.

192 Ostovar, 74–81

IRGC as a base of power.[193] This in turn built the IRGC's power and autonomy of action both inside and outside Iran.[194]

IRGC expert Afshon Ostovar states that the IRGC today "is a security service, an intelligence organization, a social and cultural force, and a complex industrial and economic conglomerate. It is foremost a military organization."[195] For the purposes of this case study, the most important aspect of the IRGC is its role in managing relations with Iran's many non-state affiliates—an important job considering the Islamic Republic's diplomatic isolation and lack of state allies other than Syria for most of its history.[196] Iranian client management is the job of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGCQF), an intelligence and paramilitary organization whose closest American parallel is the World War II-era Office of Strategic Services (OSS).[197] The IRGCQF was formed after the end of the Iran-Iraq War to replace the disbanded Office of Liberation Movements (OLM).[198]

IRGC sponsorship efforts in Iraq have benefitted from a number of advantages including the long, permeable border between Iraq and Iran, shared Shia religion, and continuity within the leadership of the Islamic Republic and the IRGC. Developing clandestine networks that reach across the border was feasible even under Saddam's despotic rule, and Saddam's harsh repression of the Iraqi Shia population led to cross-border refugee flows that Iran was able to harness in order to develop SCIRI and the Badr

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193 Ostovar, 143.

194 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 225–26.

195 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 5.

196 Ostovar, 102–4, 193; Afshon Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas in Iranian Foreign Policy: When Strategy and Identity Politics Collide" (Washington, DC: *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 2016), 1, http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/50698/Ostovar%20-%20Sectarian%20Dilemmas%20in%20Iranian%20Foreign%20Policy%20-%202016.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

197 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 6, 121–22; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 182.

198 The OLM was formed by Ayatollah Montazeri, a powerful patron of the IRGC "...to develop contacts between the Guards and outside Muslim organizations…" opposed to the western powers, the Soviets, or the Israelis. Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 112, 146

Corps.[199] Iran's theocratic Shia regime helps it when dealing with Shia clients—including those in Iraq.[200] While the Iranian doctrine of *velayet-e faqih,* with its elevation and emulation of Iran's Supreme Leader may be a tough pill for many Iraqi Shiites to swallow, the broader Shiite identity gives the IRGCQF a set of common themes, references and shared history and threats with which to develop compatible ideology and objectives among surrogate and proxy forces.[201] Additionally, the Shia community's history of clerical violence leads to a level of cultural comfort with the occasionally violent methods of the IRGC—in both the street and the Iranian corridors of power.[202] Finally, the IRGC's 35-year, ongoing sponsorship effort in Iraq has depended on a level of continuity that is unprecedented, especially when compared with the efforts of democracies.[203] At the highest level, Iran has only had two Supreme Leaders since 1979, and the IRGC has enjoyed strong relations with both, enabling the IRGC to chart a steady course with its Iraqi efforts.[204] Continuity is also important with respect to key personnel in Iraq. The IRGCQF has a high degree of familiarity with the issues in Iraq and with the actors.[205] Qassem Soleimani has been in command of the Quds Force since 1998, and the Iranian government has appointed Quds Force officers as ambassadors in Baghdad since 2003.[206] Though Iranian diplomatic and economic efforts are outside the scope of this document, IRGCQF ambassadors likely help to synchronize Iranian diplomacy in Iraq with client management. Continuity leads to a high degree of familiarity between Quds

199 "Shiite Politics," 2; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 19–20.

200 Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas," 11–12; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 238–39.

201 Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas," 13; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 238–39; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 3–4, 6–7.

202 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 10, 211.

203 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

204 Filkins; Afshon Ostovar, "From Tehran to Mosul: Iran and the Middle East's Great Game," *Foreign Affairs* (Accessed on Calhoun.nps.edu), November 4, 2016, 3–4, http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/50697/Ostovar_From%20Tehran%20to%20Mosul_Nov16.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

205 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

206 Filkins; Ostovar, "Tehran to Mosul," 3; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 226; Amir Toumaj, "Qods Force Commander to Advance Tehran's Influence as Ambassador to Iraq," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), April 23, 2017, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/04/qods-force-commander-to-advance-tehrans-influence-in-iraq-in-new-role-as-ambassador.php.

Force officers and their partners in Iraq. Men like Hadi al-Ameri and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis have been working with the IRGC for over 30 years.[207] Though Persian IRGCQF personnel have cultural and linguistic barriers to overcome when working with Arab Iraqis, they have the unique capability of leveraging Lebanese Hezbollah personnel to work with Iraqi clients.[208] This has been very successful for the Iranians, especially since Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).[209]

B.   THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP

In 1982, the brutal Iran-Iraq War had been raging for two years. Iraqi forces had achieved some initial victories, but their advance had been stopped, and the Iranian counteroffensive began to gain ground in the spring of 1982.[210] It was in this heady environment of success on the conventional battlefield that SCIRI was assembled from the population of refugees pushed out of Iraq by Saddam's repression.[211] Meanwhile, in 1981, leftist opponents of the Islamic Republic's leadership began a bombing campaign—even wounding Ali Khamenei.[212] The harsh crackdown that followed led many Iranian leftists to seek refuge in Iraq.[213] Most notably, the MKO began working with Saddam's regime in 1983 as an asymmetric force conducting terrorist attacks inside

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207 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 38; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 24; Ali Mamouri, "Why Shiites Are Divided over Iranian Role in Iraq," trans. Joelle El-Khoury *Al-Monitor*, May 12, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/sadrist-stances-iraqi-shiites-opposing-iranian-policy.html; Susannah George, "Breaking Badr," *Foreign Policy* (blog), November 6, 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/breaking-badr/; David Daoud, "PMF Deputy Commander Muhandis Details Hezbollah Ops in Iraq," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), January 9, 2017, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/01/pmf-deputy-commander-muhandis-details-hezbollah-ops-in-iraq.php.

208 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 66–69, 84.

209 Felter, and Fishman, 68–70.

210 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 64, 74, 80.

211 "Shiite Politics," 2, 3; Yitzhak Nakash, *Reaching for Power: The Shi'a in the Modern Arab World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 87; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 111.

212 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 71.

213 Ostovar, 72–73.

Iran, and also serving alongside Iraqi troops.[214] The formation of the Badr Brigades as SCIRI's militia may have been inspired by Saddam's sponsorship of the MKO.[215]

In the environment of the Iran-Iraq War, the IRGC was not competing with other sponsors for the allegiance of SCIRI or Badr.[216] Iran was diplomatically isolated after the 1979 revolution.[217] The Arab states were scared of Iran, especially after its successes in the spring of 1982, and they were backing Saddam.[218] The international community, including the United States, also supported Iraq.[219] Iran, on the other hand, struggled to resupply its troops.[220] There was, however, a level of client competition in the environment. SCIRI and Badr were not the only Iraqi groups supported by the IRGC. Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) served as a Kurdish partner for the IRGC in the North, and Iran also provided sanctuary to the Shia Dawa Party.[221] Dawa, however, proved to be a much less malleable client than SCIRI.[222] Its leaders did not espouse *velayet-e faqih* like SCIRI and, though Dawa initially participated in SCIRI's umbrella organization meetings, it soon withdrew its representatives.[223] Some Dawa members remained in Iranian exile, but others took refuge in Arab capitals, or continued the struggle inside Iraq.[224]

Iran's goals and objectives in this environment were to defeat Saddam Hussein while consolidating and expanding the Islamic Revolution. In 1982, the leaders of the

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214 Ostovar, 73–74.

215 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 7; "Shiite Politics," 3–4.

216 Ranj Alaaldin, "Iran's Weak Grip," *Foreign Affairs*, February 11, 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/2016-02-11/irans-weak-grip.

217 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 81.

218 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 81.

219 Ostovar, 81–82.

220 Ostovar, 82.

221 "Shiite Politics," 2–3, 13; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

222 "Shiite Politics," 2–3.

223 "Shiite Politics," 3.

224 "Shiite Politics," 2–3.

Islamic Republic believed that their recent battlefield success would continue.[225] SCIRI was conceived of as a sort of government-in-exile.[226] When the victorious Iranian armies conquered Baghdad, they could install SCIRI in power, and have a friendly, pro-Iranian ally to their west.[227] The Islamic Republic would not have to worry about another Sunni dictator invading its territory. In 1983, with the founding of the Badr Brigades, Iran gained a surrogate force that fought as an Iraqi auxiliary to the IRGC, with IRGC officers.[228] Badr units fought at the front in IRGC attacks, and as a hold force— occupying Iranian-controlled territory in Iraq.[229] They also conducted external terrorist operations, demonstrating regional reach. In an IRGC-directed terrorist operation, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis coordinated a bombing attack on the U.S. and French embassies to Kuwait in 1983.[230] Additionally, the Badr Corps extended its intelligence and operational networks into Iraq, but perhaps its most valuable intelligence function was interrogating Iraqi prisoners of war.[231] Badr personnel were notoriously effective interrogators—so much so that they built resentment among the Iraqi Shia community, which remembered the treatment of Shia POWs by their own countrymen.[232] This led to political difficulties for SCIRI and Badr after they returned to Iraq in 2003.[233] However, many Shia prisoners were happy to denounce Saddam.[234] These *tawwabin* (penitents), often high-ranking

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225 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 110–11.

226 Ostovar, 111.

227 Ostovar, 110–11.

228 "Shiite Politics," 3–4; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 111; Faleh A. Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq* (London, UK: Saqi, 2003), 253.

229 "Shiite Politics," 3; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 111.

230 Muhandis, who was affiliated with Dawa at the time, would go on to join the Badr Corps. Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 24; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 38; James Glanz, and Marc Santora, "Iraqi Lawmaker Was Convicted in 1983 Bombings in Kuwait That Killed 5," *The New York Times*, February 7, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/07/world/middleeast/07bomber.html?_r=0; Phillip Smyth, "There Is No 'Good' Shia Militia in Iraq," *The Daily Beast*, April 17, 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/04/17/is-there-a-good-shia-militia-in-iraq.html.

231 "Shiite Politics," 3–4.

232 "Shiite Politics," 4–5, 19.

233 "Shiite Politics," 3, 19.

234 "Shiite Politics," 4–5.

officers, joined Badr Corps and provided a significant degree of organizational and military expertise.[235]

During the war, Iranian goals and objectives matched very closely with those of SCIRI and Badr. Exiled from Iraq, the clerics and politicians of SCIRI would be happy to return and dominate a new, Shia-led government.[236] Even if members of SCIRI or Badr had doubts about their military objectives, or the way in which their organizations were employed, they had little leverage to make changes. SCIRI and Badr were completely dependent on Iran for their existence. They lived in sanctuary in Iran, were trained at IRGC-run camps, and served in IRGC-organized and IRGC-led units.[237] Additionally, though Iran exercised a massive level of sponsor oversight, and many Iraqi exiles chafed at being subordinate guests of the Persians, the IRGC were not completely imperious hosts.[238] They sought to build personal as well as professional relationships with their clients, paid salaries, and even provided Iranian wives to members of Badr Corps.[239]

At the outset of the relationship between the IRGC, SCIRI and the Badr Corps, Iranian ideology was dominated by the teaching of Ayatollah Khomeini. With his radicalism and espousal of the downtrodden and repressed—especially among the Islamic populations of the world—Khomeini had a message with natural appeal for Iraqi Shiites suffering under Saddam's cruel Baathist regime.[240] However, Khomeini's guardianship of the jurisprudent doctrine—*velayet-e faqih*—was alien to Iraqi Shiites (indeed most Shiites).[241] Khomeini's *velayet-e faqih* states that politics should be monitored and guided by the clerical class, with a single Supreme Leader standing as the paramount political and religious figure.[242] In the Islamic Republic, the democratic portions of the

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235 "Shiite Politics," 4–5.

236 "Shiite Politics," 3.

237 "Shiite Politics," 3–4.

238 "Shiite Politics," 7.

239 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 226; "Shiite Politics," 4.

240 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 38; "Shiite Politics," 2–4.

241 Ostovar, 38; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 31–32.

242 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 31.

government are subordinate to the Supreme Leader and the clergy.[243] To gain Iranian support, Mohammad Baqr al-Hakim and the other founders of SCIRI had to profess their support for *velayet-e faqih*, implying that the future Iraqi regime they hoped to lead would be at least partially subordinate to Khomeini and his successors.[244] Historically, the Iraqi Shia clergy in Najaf has clung to the more traditional, quietist school of clerical relations to politics—a trend exemplified by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.[245] Decades after the Iran-Iraq War, SCIRI leaders would claim that their espousal of *velayet-e faqih* was purely pragmatic—a decision they had to take to placate their Iranian hosts.[246] This is probably true. Dawa—which never espoused *velayet-e faqih*—did not receive the same level of training and support that SCIRI and Badr did.[247] Nevertheless, this forced imposition of ideology is evidence that even at the outset the IRGC was conducting effective client management—leveraging its high level of sponsor oversight and SCIRI's high level of client dependence to increase ideological compatibility. Though the senior leaders of SCIRI may not have truly believed in the Islamic Republic's ideology, many younger members of Badr Corps—fighting alongside IRGC officers—seem to have been influenced. When SCIRI began distancing itself from *velayet-e faqih* after OIF, the Badr Organization did not.[248] Its leaders, as well as veterans who have gone on to other organizations, can be found openly expressing support for Iran and appearing in photos with Qassem Soleimani.[249] For example, Badr Corps Commander Hadi al-Ameri has been quoted saying, "I love Qassem Suleimani! . . . He is my dearest friend."[250]

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243 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 11–12, 238–40.

244 Ostovar, 111.

245 "Shiite Politics," 2, 11; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 8.

246 "Shiite Politics," 16.

247 "Shiite Politics," 2–3.

248 "Shiite Politics," 15–16, 21.

249 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 227–28.

250 As quoted in Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

Figure 9. Hadi al-Ameri Pictured on the Left during the Iran-Iraq War, and on the Right with Qassem Soleimani in 2015.[251]

To understand how this patron-client relationship changed over time, we will now examine the significant transition points and subsequent phases of the relationship. These points include: the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, the failed Shia uprisings in 1991, Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, The withdrawal of U.S. troops and Arab Spring of 2011, and the Islamic State offensive and formation of the Popular Mobilization Forces in 2014.

C. SIGNIFICANT TRANSITION POINTS AND PHASES

1. 1988–1991: War's End and the Cautious Years

In 1988, the long nightmare of the Iran-Iraq War came to an end with a negotiated peace settlement.[252] The war had been extremely costly—especially in terms of human lives.[253] Iranian interests shifted with the end of the war.[254] The Islamic Republic's leaders had no desire to provoke a re-opening of hostilities.[255] Even idealists like

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251 "Global Threats Assessment: Biography and Report Card of a Known Terrorist Hadi Farhan Abdullah Al-Ameri," *Global Threats Assessment* (blog), October 6, 2015, http://globalthreatsassessment.blogspot.com/2015/10/biography-and-report-card-of-known.html; ميت يمشـــي, "'@Iraqism: General Qassim Soleimani Pictured with Head of Badr Hadi Al-Ameri. Best Pic so Far. #Iraq Pic.Twitter.Com/2on6PGjUx6' الضـــــلوع بســـيلفي," microblog, @dead_walker (blog), November 5, 2014, https://twitter.com/dead_walker/status/530018181574717441.

252 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 99.

253 "Shiite Politics," 5.

254 "Shiite Politics," 5.

255 "Shiite Politics," 5.

Montazeri, who had always stood for the radical internationalist wing of the revolutionary clergy, now advocated a more pragmatic approach.[256] Additionally, Khomeini had passed away in 1989, and was replaced by Ali Khamenei.[257] Iran focused its energy inward while Khamenei consolidated his succession.[258]

This new era saw a divergence of objectives between Iran and its Iraqi clients. According to a senior member of SCIRI interviewed by the Crisis Group, "The end of the war left us bewildered…We felt betrayed by Iran's acceptance of the Iraqi terms. We were at our nadir, both in our position in Iran and our political and military activity. Iran wanted to maintain peace at all cost, and wanted nothing to disrupt this."[259] While still enemies of Saddam Hussein, the Iranians preferred to lick their wounds instead of picking another fight. Fortunately for Iranian client management, SCIRI and Badr had such a high degree of dependence on the IRGC that they had nowhere else to turn. The IRGC confined the Badr Corps to its camps in Iran.[260] The IRGC also shifted manpower elsewhere, removing IRGC officers from Badr units, and replacing them with *tawwabin*.[261] The situation looked grim for SCIRI and Badr, but soon Saddam Hussein would overreach again, invading Kuwait and creating an opportunity for SCIRI, Badr, and their Iranian patrons to re-insert themselves onto the Iraqi scene.[262]

2.   1991-2002: Uprisings and Opening

Following their expulsion from Kuwait in Operation Desert Storm, elements of Saddam's defeated army in Southern Iraq began a revolt against Saddam.[263] The Shiite population of the South joined in the revolt—turning it "into a full-scale popular

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256 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 120.

257 Ostovar, 141; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 32.

258 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 142–44.

259 As quoted in "Shiite Politics," 5.

260 "Shiite Politics," 5.

261 "Shiite Politics," 5.

262 "Shiite Politics," 5.

263 "Shiite Politics," 5.

uprising."[264] The IRGC was quick to exploit the situation. It released the restraints on the Badr Corps, and Badr operatives infiltrated southern Iraq.[265] Soon, images of Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim and Khomeini began appearing in rebellious areas.[266] Unfortunately for the Badr Corps, the local population was apprehensive about these outsiders who had fought against their own countrymen in the Iran-Iraq War, and were championing Iranian-style theocracy.[267] When U.S. forces failed to intervene in support of the rebels, many southern Iraqis blamed it on the presence of Badr—believing that the United States feared enabling an Iranian power grab.[268] Without American interference, Saddam Hussein was able to move in loyal units with armor and helicopter support to brutally crush the uprising.[269] Badr Corps withdrew its forces to sanctuary in Iran—leaving Iraqi Shiites even more resentful as they dealt with the hell of Saddam's repression, and the poverty of the sanctions regime.[270]

Compatibility of goals and objectives had seen a sharp convergence during the uprising, but after it was crushed, SCIRI began attempting to diversify its sponsor portfolio.[271] The organization was still highly dependent on IRGC sponsorship, but for the following reasons, began exploring opportunities for increased sponsor competition: "disenchantment with Iran's passive approach toward the desired Islamic revolution in Iraq, its unhappiness about Iran's treatment of its followers as surly underlings and the post-1990 U.S. hostility toward the Iraqi regime."[272] During the 1990s, SCIRI opened diplomatic offices in Western capitals, and began a pattern of balancing between Tehran

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264 "Shiite Politics," 5; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57; Jabar, *The Shi'ite Movement in Iraq*, 269–70.

265 "Shiite Politics," 6; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57.

266 "Shiite Politics," 6; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57.

267 "Shiite Politics," 6.

268 "Shiite Politics," 6; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57–58.

269 "Shiite Politics," 6; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57–58.

270 "Shiite Politics," 6, 8; Reidar Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power: SCIRI and the Evolution of U.S. Policy in Iraq.," International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies 2, no. 1 (2008): 32; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57–58; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

271 "Shiite Politics," 7, 22; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 59.

272 "Shiite Politics," 7.

and Washington that would continue for over a decade.[273] SCIRI joined Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress (INC) in 1992.[274] Then, in 1998, the United States proffered SCIRI assistance under the Iraq Liberation Act.[275] Interestingly, SCIRI declined the American support, claiming that it preferred America to use political and diplomatic pressure against Saddam.[276] This hesitance to break with the IRGC was likely due both to higher ideological compatibility with Tehran, and the still-high level of dependence SCIRI and Badr Corps had on the Iranians—who were providing them with needed sanctuary.[277]

Interestingly, the IRGC appeared to tolerate SCIRI's tack toward the Americans.[278] After failing to defeat Saddam conventionally during the Iran-Iraq War, and failing again with the popular uprisings after the Gulf War, Iranian leaders may have realized that their best chance of removing Saddam and installing a friendly regime in Baghdad would involve American military action.[279] The United States was certainly active against Saddam during the 1990s—enforcing the no-fly zones and launching strikes in Iraq.[280] After 9/11, as SCIRI began attending exile conferences in London, and sending representatives to the White House, the Iranians did not seem to stand in the way.[281] Rather they continued to support SCIRI, while leveraging their long-standing relationships, and the integration of SCIRI and Badr with the IRGC to maintain sponsor oversight.[282] SCIRI was also doing its part to stay in Iran's good graces while branching out—in the 1990s, Muhammad Baqr al-Haklim churned out writings that demonstrated a

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273 "Shiite Politics," 7–10, 21.

274 "Shiite Politics," 7; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 59.

275 "Shiite Politics," 8; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 59.

276 "Shiite Politics," 8–9.

277 "Shiite Politics," 7–8; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 59.

278 "Shiite Politics," 7.

279 According to one Iraqi source, SCIRI certainly felt this way. "Shiite Politics," 7.

280 "No-Fly Zones," *Global Policy Forum*, accessed May 17, 2017, https://www.globalpolicy.org/previous-issues-and-debate-on-iraq/no-fly-zones.html.

281 "Shiite Politics," 8; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power."

282 "Shiite Politics," 7; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 226.

high level of ideological and objective compatibility with the Islamic Republic.[283] In retrospect, it appears that the Iranians made a strategic decision to risk a significant increase in sponsor competition in order to insert their highly organized, pro-Iranian political party into Washington's good graces.[284] Iraqi intelligence documents from the period suggest that Ayatollah Khamenei personally approved SCIRI's opening to America.[285] If this was indeed a conscious gamble, it paid off handsomely in the post-invasion era.[286]

While SCIRI focused on diplomacy during the 1990s, the IRGC exercised sponsor oversight and influenced Badr's client organizational enforcement while overseeing Badr's organization and development of clandestine networks in Iraq.[287] Perhaps in response to the failure in 1991, Badr Corps' underground followed the Hezbollah playbook, developing cover businesses, NGOs and medical facilities to protect Badr and Quds Force operatives in Iraq while building the social base.[288] The IRGC operated training camps in Iran for Badr fighters, and organized Badr Corps operations into four geographic "axes" in Iraq—each responsible for sabotage, subversion, and recruitment.[289] The kinetic tactics developed by Badr while fighting the Baath regime during the 1990s were passed on to anti-coalition militias fighting U.S. forces after 2003.[290] More importantly, the underground logistical networks were maintained during OIF—with Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani, the former Baghdad axis commander, controlling a notorious, explosively-formed penetrator (EFP)-smuggling network.[291]

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283 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 58.

284 Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power."; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

285 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 26.

286 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 112.

287 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 20–21.

288 Felter, and Fishman, 22.

289 Felter, and Fishman, 21.

290 Felter, and Fishman, 22.

291 Felter, and Fishman, 21.

3.   2003-2011: OIF and the Occupation

In spring, 2003, the United States, leading a "coalition of the willing," invaded Iraq, and removed Saddam's Baath Party from power. SCIRI had successfully ingratiated itself with the Bush administration during the run-up to the invasion.[292] Afterward it exercised outsize power in the interim government.[293] In May 2003—after Saddam's regime had crumbled—SCIRI and Badr Corps personnel once again poured back into Iraq.[294] OIF was by far the most significant turning point in the relationship between Iran and its affiliates in SCIRI and Badr Corps. With Saddam's removal, both parties saw their goals and objectives change overnight. SCIRI was transformed from an exile party, beholden to its external backers, to an Iraqi political party with a need to appeal to Iraqi Shiite voters in order to maintain the power it had gained by courting American favor.[295] Iran, on the other hand, was no longer seeking to eliminate the threat posed by Saddam. Still traumatized by the Iran-Iraq War, Iran was now seeking to prevent the rise of another Saddam.[296] To do so it sought an Iraq that was weak, relatively divided, and on friendly terms with Iran.[297] It also wanted to limit the potential for a strike or invasion by the American forces who had overturned the regimes on Iran's Western and Eastern borders, while building Iranian power projection capability.[298]

The ability to operate openly in Iraq significantly decreased SCIRI and Badr's dependence on Iran.[299] SCIRI began distancing itself rhetorically from Iran and from the doctrine of *velayet-e faqih*, culminating in 2007 when SCIRI cut the "Islamic Revolution" from its title, changing its name to the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq

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292 Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 31–38.

293 "Shiite Politics," 11.

294 "Shiite Politics," i, 9.

295 "Shiite Politics," i.

296 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 182.

297 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 41.

298 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas," 15; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 170–71.

299 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 60.

(ISCI).[300] However, close examination of Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim's statement indicates that this distancing was hedged, and likely rhetorical at best.[301] An interesting parallel is SCIRI/ISCI's rhetorical opposition to the American-led post-war institutions it was participating in.[302] The Supreme Council seemed to be attempting to broaden its appeal among Iraqi voters without alienating either of its external sponsors.[303] It was hampered in this by a series of succession crises. First, in 2003, Mohammad Baqr al-Hakim was assassinated in Najaf—this was a serious blow, as Mohammad Baqr was the senior cleric in the organization, and the only one likely to ever be a point of emulation for Shiites.[304] In conservative Shiite politics, clerical seniority is extremely important. All overtly religious parties have a *marja al-taqlid*, or point of emulation inside or outside the organization—a senior cleric who provides the religious guidance followed by the party.[305] If Mohammad Baqr al-Hakim had survived and advanced as a religious authority, he may have given much-needed credibility to SCIRI/ISCI.[306] His loss forced the party to redouble its efforts to appeal to Iraqi voters.[307] Mohammad Baqr's brother, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, who replaced him, was not a senior religious figure, but at least he had credibility within the movement, having previously commanded the Badr Corps.[308]

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300 "Shiite Politics," i, 15–16; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power," 36–37; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 8; Ahmed Ali, "ISW Blog: The Revival of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq: 2013 Iraq Update #28," *ISW Blog* (blog), July 16, 2013, http://iswresearch.blogspot.com.au/2013/07/the-revival-of-islamic-supreme-council.html; Phillip Smyth, "Should Iraq's ISCI Forces Really Be Considered 'Good Militias'?," *The Washington Institute*, August 17, 2016, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/should-iraqs-isci-forces-really-be-considered-good-militias.

301 "Shiite Politics," 15–16; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 31.

302 "Shiite Politics," 10–11.

303 "Shiite Politics," i–ii, 10–11, 15–16; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 62–64. Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 32–33.

304 "Shiite Politics," 10; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 61–62.

305 "Shiite Politics," 1–2; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 8, 31.

306 "Shiite Politics," 17; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 32–33; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 61–62.

307 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 62.

308 "Shiite Politics," 10, 17; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 36; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 32–33.

However, Abd al-Aziz passed control to his son Ammar in 2009.[309] As a relative neophyte, Ammar al-Hakim did not have a strong degree of support within SCIRI and especially Badr.[310] This, combined with ISCI's tack away from Iran, likely led to the soft split between the Badr Organization and ISCI, which was not made official until 2012.[311] Despite the rhetorical distancing from Iran during this period, SCIRI/ISCI's political objectives continued to display evidence of compatibility with Iran's strategic objectives. For example, Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim twice proposed a federal region in Iraq's nine Southern provinces—both times after returning from trips to Iran.[312] This proposal was unpopular with most Iraqis, including Shias, most of whom preferred no federalism, or a smaller autonomous region around Basra, but it dovetailed nicely with Iran's goal of a weak, decentralized neighbor.[313] Hakim also called for Iraq to pay Iran reparations for the Iran-Iraq War.[314] Throughout the OIF era, ISCI was the Iraqi party with the highest degree of compatibility with Iran.[315]

While SCIRI changed its name to ISCI and postured itself as Washington's favorite Shia political party, the Badr Corps officially changed its name to the Badr Organization for Reconstruction and Development to avoid clashes with Coalition Forces.[316] Badr claimed it was disarming, though it never produced any evidence for

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309 "Shiite Politics," 17; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 66.

310 "Shiite Politics," 17; Mustafa Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances Change Political Landscape," *Niqash*, March 15, 2012, http://www.niqash.org/en/articles/politics/3011/; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 66.

311 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 24, 26, 39; Reidar Visser, "Religious Alliances among Pro-Iranian Special Groups in Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 4, no. 9 (September 2011): 6; Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Smyth, "Should Iraq's ISCI Forces Really Be Considered 'Good Militias'?"; Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas," 14.

312 "Shiite Politics," 17–18.

313 "Shiite Politics," 17–18, 21–22; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 32; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 41.

314 "Shiite Politics," 21; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 60–61.

315 "Shiite Politics," 21.

316 "Shiite Politics," 9–10; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 31; Lionel Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces," *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 30, 2005, http://www.cfr.org/iraq/shiite-militias-iraqs-security-forces/p9316.

this.[317] At the same time, many of its members took positions within the reconstituted Iraqi Security Forces (ISF).[318] This trend was especially prevalent after the 2005 elections, when Badr's Bayan Jaber Solagh took control of the Ministry of the Interior.[319] Though access to ISF materiel and official Government of Iraq (GOI) pay naturally decreased Badr's dependence on the IRGC, the sectarian atrocities committed by Badr operatives in ISF uniforms during this era testified to their continued identity as Shiite militiamen, indicating a continuing ideological compatibility between Badr members and the Shia power next door.[320] Significantly, some of the atrocities committed by Badr's ISF members included killing Iraqi pilots who were veterans of the Iran-Iraq War.[321] This Iranian score-settling indicates a very high degree of IRGC influence.[322] Additionally, though the members of Badr conducting sectarian cleansing of Sunni neighborhoods, and extra-judicial killings and torture of Sunni Iraqis during this period likely did not consider it this way, their sectarian atrocities contributed to the destruction of Iraq's social fabric, leading to the type of divided, weak society Iran preferred in its neighbor.[323] Badr objectives and Iranian objectives were still highly compatible. In 2007, defending these ties, Badr commander Hadi al-Ameri told Arab States, "you deserted us. You sold us. We have no door to knock on but Iran's."[324] Unlike ISCI, the Badr organization never distanced itself from the doctrine of absolute *velayet-e faqih*.[325] The IRGC's long-term investment in Badr Corps had finally paid off, as the loyal clients in

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317 "Shiite Politics," 10–11; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces"; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 5.

318 "Shiite Politics," 10; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 34–35; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces."

319 "Shiite Politics," 10, 13; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces."

320 "Shiite Politics," 13; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 34; George, "Breaking Badr."

321 "Shiite Politics," 13.

322 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 60–61.

323 "Shiite Politics," 13–14; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 41; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces"; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 63; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 247–48.

324 As quoted in "Shiite Politics," 21.

325 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 18.

the organization became what Ostovar described as "the power brokers of a new Iraqi state."[326]

Faced with increased sponsor competition from the Americans and, in a sense, from Iraqi Shia voters, the IRGC began diversifying its spectrum of clients.[327] Demonstrably pro-Iranian, and even IRGC-controlled organizations emerged from the Badr fold at this time. Two prominent examples are Mustafa al-Sheibani's facilitation network, and *Kataib Hezbollah*.[328] Additionally, the IRGC began courting other clients across the spectrum of Shia politics.[329] Iran worked with political parties like Dawa, and with Moqtada al-Sadr and his militia, *Jaish al Mahdi* (JAM).[330] Splits from the Badr Organization seemed amicable—with new groups maintaining cordial (if clandestine) relations with prominent Badr Corps leaders.[331] Conversely, the IRGC's creation of "special groups" from the loosely organized Mahdi Army, were always at the expense of the mercurial al-Sadr, oftentimes with new organizations seeking to trade on the Sadrist cachet while conducting the IRGC's business.[332] This diversification and increase in client competition was a stark change from the policy pursued by the IRGC during the

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326 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 112.

327 "Shiite Politics," i, 22.

328 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–7; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 187.

329 "Shiite Politics," 22.

330 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; "Shiite Politics," i; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 5.

331 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14–15.

332 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 34–35, 45; Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Battle for the Future of Iraq* (New York: Scribner, 2008), 103; Time has shown that these organizations, like Qazali's AAH, are closer to the IRGC-backed Badr family of militias, than the Sadrists from which they emerged. Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56; Iran's spectrum of political partners and strange bedfellows was not limited to Shiite Arabs. The IRGC of course maintained relations with Jalal Talabani's PUK. "Shiite Politics," 12–13.

Iran-Iraq War, when it had sought to unify Shia exiles under the SCIRI umbrella.[333] It is possible that the Iranians were creating client competition to increase the credibility of sanctions threatened against wayward clients, but this does not seem to be the case in this example (with the exception of al-Sadr). Rather, the IRGC seemed to be pursuing two main objectives with this strategy. First, it was hedging its bets—any faction that gained political power would have some type of relationship with Iran.[334] Second, and most interestingly, by diversifying its portfolio of affiliates the IRGC gained the ability to simultaneously exercise leverage at all levels of Iraqi Shia society.[335] Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman described Iranian sponsorship efforts during the occupation as a "two-tracked strategy."[336] Radical clients would increase the level of violence, and moderates (like SCIRI and Badr) would work with U.S. forces to reduce the violence—further ingratiating themselves.[337] This approach focused international attention on IRGC support to radicals, obscuring the broader spectrum of clients that the IRGCQF was developing.[338] At the bottom of the spectrum, elite special groups—whether derived from JAM, like *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH), or from Badr, like *Kataib Hezbollah* (KH)—could apply kinetic pressure to the Americans, reminding them of the costs that the IRGC could impose on Washington, while influencing Status of Forces negotiations.[339] These groups were enabled by the "independent logistical connections to Iran" provided by

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333 "Shiite Politics," 2–3, 22; Afshon Ostovar, "Soldiers of the Revolution: A Brief History of Iran's IRGC," *Foreign Affairs* (Accessed on Library.nps.edu), September 7, 2016, 3, http://library.nps.edu/scholarly-content-2016?p_p_id=101&p_p_life cycle=0&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&_101_struts_action=%2Fasset_publisher%2Fview_con tent&_101_returnToFullPageURL=%2Fscholarly-content- 2016&_101_assetEntryId=107807341&_101_type=document&redirect=http%3A%2F%2Flibrary.nps.edu %2Fscholarly-content-2016%3Fp_p_id%3D3%26p_p_life cycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dmaximized%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26_3_groupId%3D0%26_3_keywords %3Dafshon%2Bostovar%26_3_struts_action%3D%252Fsearch%252Fsearch%26_3_redirect%3D%252Fs cholarly-content-2016.

334 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 9, 55.

335 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 55.

336 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 173–74.

337 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 12.

338 Felter, and Fishman, 6, 28.

339 Felter, and Fishman, 8, 9, 26–27; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 5–6; Ostovar, "Soldiers," 3.

underground networks like Sheibani's.[340] They could also threaten uncooperative Iraqi politicians and clerics.[341] Next on the spectrum, the Sadrists were popular with the urban poor, and radically opposed to the U.S. occupation.[342] By supporting al-Sadr, the IRGC started fires that SCIRI and Badr, with its presence in the ISF, could help put out.[343] At the political level, Dawa seemed like a compromise between ISCI and the Sadrists for many Iraqis and Americans, and the IRGC certainly did not enjoy the same history and influence with Dawa that it did with SCIRI.[344] Nevertheless, Soleimani reached out to Dawa and other Shia parties, and Nouri al-Maliki, Dawa's supposedly weak consensus pick for prime minister, eventually proved to be a pro-Iranian strongman.[345] After 2003, Iran's preferred method of extending influence was through Iraqi politics—sponsorship of armed militias was actually a secondary, shaping operation.[346]

In 2005, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was elected president of Iran.[347] A former member of the IRGC's *Basij* militia—Ahmedinejad was a radical.[348] With both the clerical and democratic leadership of the Islamic Republic fully behind his efforts, Qassem Soleimani and the IRGCQF stepped up their efforts in Iraq, building special groups and increasingly targeting coalition forces with deadly explosively formed penetrators (EFP), a type of improvised explosive device that could cut through the side armor of American armored vehicles.[349] As EFPs became increasingly important on the battlefield, IRGCQF used one of its key Badr Corps-derived affiliates to control the

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340 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 46.

341 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 31–32.

342 "Shiite Politics," 19.

343 Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 40, 46; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 32–34.

344 "Shiite Politics," 3, 15; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 5; Ostovar, "Soldiers," 3.

345 "Shiite Politics," 15; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

346 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 8, 12, 26, 36–37.

347 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 166–69.

348 Ostovar, 166–67.

349 Ostovar, 171–72; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 77–80.

degree of violence against U.S. targets.[350] Abu Mustafa al-Sheibani, a former member of Badr Corps who stayed underground instead of emerging in 2003, headed a clandestine facilitation network that reported to the IRGCQF, and moved critical materiel, including EFPs, to IRGCQF clients, whether affiliated with Badr or its rivals.[351] With a limited number of IRGCQF personnel on the ground in Iraq, the Iranians leveraged client dependence on the al-Sheibani network for provision of EFPs to control the tempo and scope of attacks, ensuring that the actions of the IRGCQF's multiplicity of affiliates remained compatible with the IRGC.[352] The IRGC also supplied money to its clients so they could develop businesses and social projects, branching out beyond kinetic means— a trend which has expanded with the diversification of militias.[353] Though IRGCQF agents were occasionally detained by U.S. forces during the OIF era, the IRGCQF did not seem to operate the type of robust tactical advise-and-assist effort associated with U.S. Special Forces Unconventional Warfare efforts in Afghanistan and Kurdistan.[354] This was a covert, even clandestine effort, designed to be deniable even to client political groups.[355] The IRGCQF seemed to maintain sponsor oversight mostly through the use of highly trusted local agents like al-Sheibani and al-Muhandis.[356] These were trusted men who had long relationships with the Iranians.[357] Sponsor oversight was also aided by the exfiltration of Shiite militiamen to training camps in Iran and Lebanon, where they

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[350] Felter, and Fishman, 38–39.

[351] Felter, and Fishman, 6, 24, 38–39.

[352] Felter, and Fishman, 38–39, 77–80.

[353] Felter, and Fishman, 39; Amir Toumaj, "Iraqi Militia Leader Receives Warm Reception in Tehran," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), September 9, 2016, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/09/iraqi-militia-leader-receives-warm-reception-in-tehran.php.

[354] Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 49; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 64; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 185.

[355] Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 39.

[356] Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 38; Felter and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 24.

[357] Felter and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 24.

interacted with members of the IRGCQF and Lebanese Hezbollah—receiving ideological indoctrination along with tactical, technical and leadership training.[358]

4. 2011-2013: U.S. Withdrawal, Syria

At the end of 2011, all U.S. forces had departed Iraq.[359] Prior to their departure, the contested 2010 elections had resulted in Maliki's return as prime minister—following a deal brokered by Qassem Soleimani.[360] ISCI opposed Maliki's electoral coalition and was left on the sidelines—an increasingly irrelevant actor on the Shia political scene in Iraq.[361] As Iranian and ISCI goals and objectives continued to drift apart, it appeared that Iran no longer needed ISCI—a weakened political party—when it enjoyed solid relations with Maliki, who had ensconced reliable Badr clients in critical ministry positions.[362] In 2011, the IRGC may even have ceased payments to ISCI.[363] The Badr organization had supported Maliki and his political coalition, and Hadi al-Ameri was rewarded with the position of transportation minister.[364] Interestingly, Badr's increasing participation in politics did not seem to blunt its pro-Iranian outlook in the manner of SCIRI/ISCI.[365] As Minister of Transportation, al-Ameri used his control of Iraqi airspace to enable Iranian overflights delivering critical support to Assad's faltering Baath Regime in Syria.[366] Badr also worked with the IRGC to develop new militia groups to fight in Syria.[367] Syria would prove to be the crisis of this era with the most lasting impact on Iranian client management. The potential loss of Assad, Iran's longest-standing state-level ally, would not only be a diplomatic and geopolitical blow to Iran, it would also cut ground lines of

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358 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 8, 56–66, 66–69, 84.

359 Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 205.

360 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

361 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Ali, "ISW Blog."

362 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 65–67.

363 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 66–67.

364 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Ali, "ISW Blog"; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

365 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Mamouri, "Why Shiites Are Divided."

366 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; George, "Breaking Badr"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 208–9.

367 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14–15, 24.

communication (GLOCs) to Southern Lebanon, making it more difficult for the IRGC to support its strongest proxy force—Lebanese Hezbollah.[368]

As the Syrian rebels began to mount a serious threat to Assad in 2012–13, the IRGC stepped up efforts to support and enable the Shiite irregulars journeying from Iraq to Syria.[369] It also allowed the IRGC to further diversify its network of Iraqi militia clients.[370] The movement of Iraqi Shiites to the Syrian front demonstrated the high degree of ideological compatibility between Iran and the newer Shiite militias—many of whom were affiliated with the Badr organization.[371] In describing the proliferation of IRGC-backed Shiite militias, Phillip Smyth emphasizes both their interconnected nature, and their Badr Organization lineage:

> A trend in the development of Iranian proxies is the creation of seemingly new groups characterized by unified ideology and loyal, proven personnel. These groups typically emerge either from reported "splits" from an existing group or a commander's changed affiliation. What appears to be atomization within the ranks is instead more reminiscent of cell replication, with new groups simply expanding the size and influence of a broader IRGC-created network and model. This might be construed as a strategy to confuse outside observers as well as demonstrate broader acceptance for Iran's absolute velayat-e faqih ideology. . . Along with projecting the same messages, these groups cooperate openly and participate in many of the same operations. As for these newer groups' leaders and core members, many were culled from established entities created by Iran, namely the Badr Organization. . . For many years, the Badr Organization had served as a main IRGC conduit for manufacturing proxies in Iraq.[372]

Fighting in Syria was a marker of ideological compatibility because it was outside of Iraq, and Grand Ayatollah Sistani and even many of the leading Sadrist clerics were opposed to the project.[373] In 2014, Iraqis would be slow to resist the Islamic State

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368 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 205–6.

369 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 1; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

370 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 1–2.

371 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam,* 217–18.

372 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 37–38.

373 Smyth, 13–14, 16–17.

inside Iraq until Sistani issued his call to arms.[374] To overcome this lack of support from leading clerics, the IRGC played up statements by minor clerics who were tied in some way to al-Sistani or al-Sadr, while cannily using the threat posed by Sunni rebels to the Sayeeda Zainab shrine outside Damascus as a sectarian rallying cry to increase ideological compatibility between the IRGC and its client militias from Iraq, Lebanon, and even Afghanistan and Pakistan, who began flowing into Syria.[375]

Much of the fighting in Syria has been positional, with government and rebel-aligned forces facing each other in conventional or semi-conventional engagements, often in urban terrain.[376] This style of fighting is much different from the hit-and-run insurgent tactics used most frequently by Shiite militia groups against the Americans during OIF. Though unforeseen at the time, battlefield experience in Syria would prepare the IRGC for 2014, when its array of trusted client militias—battle-tested in Syria—would form a significant portion of the generally pro-Iranian Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).[377] Close incorporation—including training and combat advising—of these Iraqi militiamen by IRGCQF officers in Syria helped further integrate the Iraqis into Iran's broader "Axis of Resistance," with Iraqis expressing Shia sectarian themes and displaying symbols popular with the IRGC and Lebanese Hezbollah.[378] The close integration of Iraqi Shiite militiamen with IRGCQF officers and advisors during the fighting in Syria (and later in Iraq against the Islamic State), may also prove to have a legacy similar to that of the Badr Corps' integration with the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq War: a band-of-brothers effect in

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374 Renad Mansour, "From Militia to State Force: The Transformation of Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi," *Carnegie Middle East Center*, accessed April 27, 2017, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/61986.

375 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 3–5, 7, 13–15, 17–18.

376 Smyth, 44–45; Toumaj, "Militia Leader."

377 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 2, 49–52.

378 Smyth, 21, 24–25, 28–29, 37, 50–51; Toumaj, "Militia Leader"; Anne Barnard, and Sewell Chan, "Mustafa Badreddine, Hezbollah Military Commander, Is Killed in Syria," *The New York Times*, May 13, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/14/world/middleeast/mustafa-badreddine-hezbollah.html; Michael Eisenstadt, and Michael Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs, Revolutionary Guard Knock-Offs, and the Future of Iran's Militant Proxies in Iraq," *War on the Rocks*, May 9, 2017, https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/mini-hizballahs-revolutionary-guard-knock-offs-and-the-future-of-irans-militant-proxies-in-iraq/.

which lasting relationships are formed between the IRGCQF and Iraqi fighters.[379] At a minimum, the shared effort has given the Quds Force plenty of opportunities to assess rising Iraqi Shiite leaders who display potential compatibility of objectives and ideology with their Iranian partners.

5.   2014- The Islamic State vs. the PMF

In 2013, fighters from the Islamic State—Al Qaeda in Iraq's metastasized descendants—began crossing the border from Syria to support and coopt the growing Sunni uprisings against Maliki's repression.[380] In 2014, the flow of fighters transitioned into a flood, with fast-moving Islamic State columns seizing Mosul and other Sunni-majority cities, threatening Baghdad, and treating the world to a barrage of slickly-produced videos of atrocities committed against those they deemed un-Islamic.[381] Faced with an existential threat, Ali al-Sistani made a call for all Iraqis to defend their country against the Islamic State invasion.[382] Iraqi Shiites, encouraged by the strong call from the traditionally quietist Grand Ayatollah, swelled the ranks of militias—which the Government of Iraq turned into the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), officially incorporating the PMF into the GOI in 2016.[383] The strongest militias were those with long-standing ties to Iran—many of them operating under the Badr umbrella, or under leaders who had served with the Badr Corps.[384] The formation of the PMF was a boon for the IRGCQF, as some of its most loyal and effective clients would fill the key positions within the new bureaucracy developed to integrate the PMF with the Government of Iraq. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, Member of Parliament, advisor to Maliki,

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379 "Shiite Politics," 21.

380 Rayburn, Iraq *After America*, 231–32, 234–41.

381 Rayburn, 256; "Frontline PBS 2014 10 28 The Rise Of ISIS," *YouTube*, October 28, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/.

382 Mansour, "From Militia to State Force."

383 Bill Roggio, and Amir Toumaj, "Iraq's Prime Minister Establishes Popular Mobilization Forces as a Permanent 'Independent Military Formation,'" *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), accessed April 27, 2017, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/07/iraqs-prime-minister-establishes-popular-mobilization-front-as-a-permanent-independent-military-formation.php; Mansour, "From Militia to State Force."

384 Roggio, and Toumaj; Mansour, "From Militia to State Force"; Ostovar, "Tehran to Mosul," 2.

aide to Qassem Soleimani, terrorist, former Badr Corps commander, and founder of *Kataib Hezbollah*, was named deputy commander of the PMF.[385] Badr's Hadi al-Ameri has led operations at the front.[386] Additionally, the Badr Organization regained control of the Ministry of Interior with Mohammed al-Ghabban's appointment as Interior Minister.[387] With Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji replacing Ghabban, Badr has both an Iran-Iraq War veteran, and a former prisoner of U.S. forces in control of the Ministry of Interior (MOI).[388] These key positions are essential in exerting pro-Iranian influence over the PMF bureaucracy and the new militias.[389] Badr has also continued its colonization of the regular ISF—with Badr operatives gaining control of Iraqi Army units in Diyala, and expanding control of MOI units.[390]

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385 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 38; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 24; Roggio, and Toumaj, "Prime Minister Establishes PMF'"; Smyth, "There Is No 'Good' Shia Militia in Iraq"; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 200–201.

386 George, "Breaking Badr"; Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs."

387 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 55; George, "Breaking Badr."

388 Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs"; "New Iraqi Minister of Interior: From pro-Saddam to pro-Iran - Al Arabiya English," *Al-Arabiya*, January 31, 2017, https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2017/01/31/New-Iraqi-Minister-of-Interior-from-pro-Saddam-to-pro-Iran.html.

389 Smyth, "No 'Good' Militia."

390 Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs."

Figure 10.   Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (Center) with Hadi al-Ameri and Qassem Soleimani Seated to his Right, 2016.[391]

After Maliki was forced out of power, the new prime minister, Haider al-Abadi, took steps to further integrate the PMF into the GOI, insisting that they report directly to him.[392] Additionally, with U.S. forces returning to Iraq to assist the GOI and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in the fight against The Islamic State, the potential for increased sponsor competition was once again raised. For the most part, the United States has attempted to work in parallel with the PMF and its Iranian advisors and supporters—hesitating to support PMF-led operations like Tikrit, and relegating PMF militias to supporting roles on the outskirts of battles like Mosul.[393] Meanwhile, the GOI appears to be attempting to extend control over the PMF.[394] The PMF's official organs do toe the GOI's non-sectarian, law-abiding government line, but many component militias continue to display traditional sectarian themes on their own channels and

391 Hassan Dai, "The Mosul Offensive and Future of Shiite Militias," *Iranian American Forum* (blog), November 11, 2016, http://iranian-americans.com/the-mosul-offensive-and-future-of-shiite-militias/.

392 Mansour, "From Militia to State Force"; Roggio, and Toumaj, "Prime Minister Establishes PMF.'"

393 Amir Toumaj, "Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces Launch Operation Southwest of Mosul," *FDD's Long War Journal* (blog), April 29, 2017, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/04/iraqi-popular-mobilization-forces-launch-operation-southwest-of-mosul.php; Martin Chulov Spencer Ackerman in New York, "Iraqi Militia Leader Rejects Calls for Further U.S. Air Strikes on Tikrit," *The Guardian*, March 26, 2015, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/26/us-air-strikes-tikrit-iraqi-militia-leader.

394 "A Goody and Abadi," *The Economist*, January 5, 2017, http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21713901-behind-battle-mosul-lies-struggle-power-baghdad-goody-and-abadi.

feeds.[395] The PMF have also been implicated in atrocities, destruction and disappearances in liberated Sunni areas (though at least in Tikrit, some of these have been attributed to Sunni tribesmen fighting alongside the PMF).[396]

The fight against the Islamic State has seen a tremendous increase in the compatibility of objectives between the IRGC and its Iraqi affiliates. Even ISCI, though maintaining rhetorical distance from Iran and the more pro-Iranian elements of the PMF, has formed militias that are supported by the IRGC.[397] The Islamic State is a serious, unifying threat to Iraqis and Iranians. Additionally, the crisis is a chance to expand the reach and influence of Iranian clients within the ISF and GOI.[398] Indeed, the Iranians seem to view the PMF as a type of proto-IRGC—a sentiment echoed by Iraqi PMF leaders who have likened the PMF to their sponsor organization.[399] The parallels are striking. Formed during a chaotic situation from a mélange of different militias, the PMF stands outside the regular security structure of the Iraqi state, as a competitor to the ISF.[400] Additionally, the ISF (with the exception of the Iraqi Special Operations Forces) are seen as being weak and poor fighters after crumbling in front of the Islamic State in 2014.[401] The fact that many PMF leaders espouse the doctrine of *velayet-e faqih* is worrying for both American observers and Iraqi nationalists (including Moqtada al-Sadr)

395 Toumaj, "Militia Leader"; James Alec Garrison, "Popular Mobilization Messaging," ICCT Research Paper (The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism--The Hague, April 2017), 7.

396 Robert Tollast, "Inside Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units," Text, *The National Interest*, May 23, 2016, http://nationalinterest.org/feature/iraqs-shia-militias-arent-bad-you-think-16291.

397 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 67; Ali, "ISW Blog."

398 Mansour, "From Militia to State Force."

399 Jean Aziz, "What Are Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units Doing in Beirut?" trans. Pascale El-Khoury, *Al-Monitor*, August 18, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/08/lebanon-host-secret-meeting-iraq-pmus-western-diplomats.html; Renad Mansour, "The Political Battles in Baghdad after the Battle for Mosul," *War on the Rocks*, October 3, 2016, https://warontherocks.com/2016/10/the-political-battles-in-baghdad-after-the-battle-for-mosul/; Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs."

400 Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs."

401 Omar al-Jaffal, "Will Popular Mobilization Units Participate in Iraqi Elections?" trans. Pascale Menassa, *Al-Monitor*, September 4, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/09/popular-mobilization-iraq-election.html.

who view the PMF as a threat.[402] The development of Iraqi militias increasingly appears to fit Staniland's description of "armed politics," with Abadi attempting an "incorporation" strategy vis-à-vis the militias.[403] However, the militias may be too powerful to co-opt. Pro-Iranian PMF leaders appear to be positioning themselves to participate in the upcoming Iraqi elections, developing an alliance with the ousted al-Maliki against the Sadrists (who are also participating in the PMF), which seems to be leaving Abadi trapped between the two powerful Shiite blocs.[404]

Though the increasing compatibility between client and sponsor objectives can mostly be attributed to the threat from the Islamic State, the Iranians have maximized their conduct of effective client management in this period. In 2014, the IRGCQF increased its sponsor oversight by operating openly in Iraq, coordinating and advising its affiliates in the PMF, and playing up Iranian presence in various media.[405] This may have been part of a pro-Soleimani public relations campaign designed in part for Iranian audiences, but the quick response combined with increased visibility of front-line IRGC efforts served to soften the image of Iranians and their clients with some Iraqi Shiites.[406] It also provided a powerful contrast to the Obama administration's dithering response and the many restrictions on U.S. support.[407] Though it may have been inadvertent, the propaganda helped mitigate the threat of increased sponsor competition from the United States. Indeed, IRGC clients joined the chorus of Shia media outlets impugning the United States.[408] Being pro-Iranian was less poisonous politically in 2014 than it had been for SCIRI in the wake of OIF, and militia leaders and PMF officials travelled to Iran

402 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 18; Toumaj, "Militia Leader"; al-Jaffal, "Will PMU Participate?"; Smyth, "No 'Good' Militia"; Smyth, "Good Militias?"; Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs."

403 Mansour, "From Militia to State Force"; al-Jaffal, "Will PMU Participate?"; Garrison, "Popular Mobilization Messaging," 16; Staniland, "Militias, Ideology, and the State," 770, 772.

404 al-Jaffal, "Will PMU Participate?"; Mansour, "The Political Battles in Baghdad."

405 Jacob Siegel, "The Myth of Iran's Military Mastermind," *The Daily Beast*, June 5, 2015, http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/06/05/the-myth-of-iran-s-military-mastermind.html; Alaaldin, "Iran's Weak Grip"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 220–28.

406 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 227–28.

407 Ostovar, 227–28.

408 Toumaj, "Militia Leader"; Garrison, "Popular Mobilization Messaging," 19.

openly, and made friendly comments about Iran in the press.[409] Interestingly, by attempting to marginalize the PMF, the United States may be increasing the compatibility of objectives between the IRGCQF and its affiliates. Both have an interest in making sure U.S. forces do not stay in Iraq after the Islamic State is defeated.[410]

D.   ASSESSMENT

1.   Compatibility and Durability

Iran has built and maintained its influence with Badr and its militant progeny over three decades and a variety of major transition points in the operating environment. While SCIRI (later ISCI) began to go its own way in the 1990s—a trend which accelerated after Operation Iraqi Freedom—Iran may have consciously risked this decline in compatibility, cashing in its chip with SCIRI to achieve other goals: U.S. involvement in Saddam's removal, and a say in the post-OIF order.[411] Finally, by diversifying its client portfolio over time, proliferating an array of highly compatible militias like KH and AAH, as well as minimally compatible political allies like Maliki, the IRGC has been able to replace ISCI's drift away with net gains.[412] The IRGC-Badr relationship has proved to be especially durable, with Badr leaders like al-Ameri speaking up on Iran's behalf even after ISCI distanced itself from Iran.[413] Though ISCI has distanced itself rhetorically, it never overtly cut ties—as evidenced by IRGC support for ISCI's PMF militias.[414]

409 Toumaj, "Militia Leader"; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Mamouri, "Why Shiites Are Divided"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 224–25.

410 Mustafa Saadoun, "Will PMU Attack U.S. Troops in Iraq?" trans. Joelle El-Khoury, *Al-Monitor*, October 3, 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/pmu-iraqi-us-mosul-battle.html.

411 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 26; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power."

412 Felter, and Fishman, 13; Eisenstadt, and Knights, "Mini-Hizballahs

413 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

414 Ali, "ISW Blog;" "Shiite Politics," 15–16.

2. Client Dependence

Client dependence seems to demonstrate the strongest positive correlation with effective client management in this case. When Iraq was under Saddam's control, SCIRI and the Badr Corps were dependent on the Iranians for sanctuary and support. Additionally, the Badr Corps was tightly integrated with the IRGC—making for a level of client dependence (and sponsor oversight) unmatched later in this case.[415] The relationship between dependence and compatibility—especially ideological compatibility—is nicely illustrated by this quote from ISCI politician Ridha Jawad Taqi: "Wilayat al-Faqih was something that had to do with Iran. . . We used to accept Ayatollah Khomeini's resolutions because we were in Iran, and he was the leader, but SCIRI came to Iraq and now we are in Iraq."[416] As anticipated, when SCIRI became less dependent on Iran after 2003, its compatibility of objectives and ideology with Iran waned.[417] Interestingly, Badr did not seem to see the same level of compatibility divergence.

3. Sponsor Oversight

Compared to client dependence, it is more difficult to gauge sponsor oversight's impact on Iranian client management—basic indicators of sponsor oversight, like the presence of advisors, are difficult to measure in a covert campaign. However, Badr's continued compatibility with the IRGC after OIF is likely due in part to the unique way in which the IRGC exercised sponsor oversight. After 2003, Badr generally played along with SCIRI's pro-Western stance—at least on the surface—by serving in the ISF.[418] However, Badr operatives were involved in underground activities coordinated by the IRGCQF, especially weapons trafficking, and in 2014 Badr admitted to attacking

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415 "Shiite Politics," 4.

416 As quoted in "Shiite Politics," 16.

417 Garrison cites OIF as a key turning point—one which led to SCIRI transitioning from a surrogate to a proxy and eventually a partner of Iran. Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 55.

418 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 34–35.

Americans during OIF.[419] Badr's continued compatibility with Iran may be due, at least in part, to the bonds formed by Badr's integration with the IRGC during the Iran-Iraq War—a triumph of sponsor oversight.[420] The extremely high degree of continuity within the IRGCQF undoubtedly helps with the maintenance of these bonds.[421] Alternatively, the difference may simply be that SCIRI had a greater need to appeal to Iraqi voters than Badr did.[422] However, since its entrance into politics, Badr has not attempted to distance itself from Iran in the way that ISCI did in 2007. It may also be the case that Badr leaders were more closely controlled through the use of private rewards and other inducements— Hadi al-Ameri, for instance, is alleged to be paid by the IRGC, be married to an Iranian, and own property in Tehran.[423] The private rewards argument in a sense supports the earlier assertion of sponsor oversight's importance—the long period of close sponsor oversight in the 1980s may have enabled the IRGC to recruit Badr members and then use them as trusted local agents in the last two decades.

Drawing strong conclusions about IRGCQF sponsor oversight is necessarily complicated by the clandestine nature of Quds Force support to Badr and other Shiite militias. Most academic work does not have access to classified information regarding IRGCQF secret activities. The major exception is Felter and Fishman's "Iranian Strategy in Iraq, Politics and 'Other Means,'" which is based on declassified interrogation summaries and translated Iraqi intelligence products from the Saddam era.[424] Felter and Fishman are heavily cited in this thesis and in other research—for good reason—but the centrality of their work, and the relative dearth of other insights into IRGCQF sponsor oversight practices makes it difficult to advance solid assertions about those practices.

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419 Smyth, 38.

420 "Shiite Politics," 21.

421 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

422 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 68.

423 "Global Threats Assessment"; "Shiite Politics," 21; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander."

424 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 3.

4. Client Organizational Enforcement

The effect of client organizational enforcement on the compatibility of objectives and ideology between Iran and SCIRI/Badr is also difficult to analyze. Because the IRGC played a central role in forming the two groups—especially Badr—Iran was able to create cohesive, centrally organized clients.[425] The structure and discipline of these exile groups stands in stark contrast to the Sadrists, SCIRI and Badr's primary rivals in post-Saddam Iraq.[426] Moqtada al-Sadr was an extremely difficult client to manage.[427] Fortunately for the IRGCQF, his diverse, loosely organized movement proved exceptionally easy to fragment.[428] As predicted by Tamm's work, the Iranians disciplined and weakened al-Sadr by encouraging the fragmentation of his Mahdi Army, and the development of more pliant proxies, like AAH, led by Sadr's former lieutenants.[429] The amicable divorce of Badr and ISCI may be an example of this trend, but it seems more likely that this slow-moving breakup was organic, especially considering both groups' participation in the GOI, and high levels of collaboration with the Americans during the occupation.[430] If the IRGCQF did influence this split, it was likely for pragmatic reasons. Muhammad Baqr al-Hakim's murder had limited SCIRI's long-term political prospects in Iraq—especially after its American patrons departed.[431] With Badr involved in politics, and decent relations with Maliki and his Dawa Party, the IRGCQF no longer needed ISCI.[432]

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425 "Shiite Politics," i, 22.

426 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 61.

427 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 34.

428 Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 181, 183; The loose organization of JAM proved a boon to U.S. surge forces as well: Nicholas Krohley, *The Death of the Mehdi Army: The Rise, Fall and Revival of Iraq's Most Powerful Militia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 166–67.

429 Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 181, 183.

430 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 31.

431 "Shiite Politics," 16–17; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 32–33; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 61–62.

432 Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 65–67.

As with IRGCQF sponsor oversight, true insight into the internal workings of the Badr Organization is hard to come by. It is easy to compare Badr with the organizationally-challenged Sadrists, and argue that their degree of client organizational enforcement is superior, but that is a relatively basic observation. One aspect of client organizational enforcement—the degree to which the sponsor dictates or shapes the client's organization—does seem to indicate that the Quds Force has been successfully manipulating this variable of ECM. Though the details of organizational changes and leadership in Badr are not public knowledge, their effects are visible for all to see. As new Badr-affiliated militias proliferate in the manner described by Smyth as "cell replication," they never seem to be at odds with their sponsors.[433] This leads to the growth of a Badr-affiliated network that is very amenable to IRGCQF interests.[434] However, this is a very thin inference, and like sponsor oversight, it is difficult to support using multiple sources.

5. Sponsor Competition

Sponsor competition, though formally limited to Iran and the United States in this case, did seem to have a negative relationship with compatibility of objectives and ideology. As SCIRI increased its cooperation with Washington in the run-up to OIF, and worked closely with coalition forces after 2003, it postured itself as pro-Western, and distanced itself (at least rhetorically) from Iran.[435] Viewed more broadly though, the IRGC's most effective competitors for the loyalty of SCIRI politicians were Iraqi Shiite voters—who tended to prefer Shiite parties untainted by the stain of collaboration with Iran during the Iran-Iraq War.[436] As anticipated by Hypothesis 2b in the quantitative chapter, the increased sponsor competition from coalition forces and Iraqi voters in the OIF era does seem to have prompted a (continuing) proliferation of Shiite militias. In this

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433 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 37–38.

434 Smyth, 37–38, 56.

435 "Shiite Politics," ii, 5–8.

436 "Shiite Politics," i.

case, the original sponsors in the IRGC seem to have encouraged this proliferation of clients.[437]

6.   Client Competition

Client competition is the most interesting aspect of effective client management in this case. Early in the relationship, the IRGC attempted to foster unity among exiled Iraqi Shiites, but this changed after the removal of Saddam, and the Iranians began to encourage splits among their clients.[438] As mentioned above, the split of ISCI and Badr (and the splits of JAM), seemed to happen after SCIRI's distancing of itself from Iran (and JAM's splitting happened after Sadr's defiance and intransigence). However, unlike the predictions of principal-agent theory, and unlike Tamm's analysis of Syrian client management, these splits do not appear to have been motivated by a desire to bring the original groups back into the fold. Rather, the IRGCQF developed a spectrum of clients, building new capabilities, hedging against defections, and allowing the Quds Force to play clients off each other and off the American forces.[439]   Phillip Smyth argues convincingly that the dense web of interrelated IRGCQF-backed militias which has emerged from the Badr family and the fragments of JAM,

> should not be viewed as atomized entities. Instead, they should be recognized as subnetworks of a broader IRGC–Qods Force network and part and parcel of a larger regional strategy. This is especially the case for AAH and the Badr Organization. Both have direct links to new and established Shiite armed groups, including designated terrorist organizations such as Kataib Hezbollah. Mapping and potentially classifying these organizations will require creative methods to account for their sharing of members, equipment, ideological goals, and command structures.[440]

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437 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56.

438 "Shiite Politics," 2–3; Reidar Visser, "Iraq," in *Militancy and Political Violence in Shiism: Trends and Patterns*, ed. Assaf Moghadam, (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), 98; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 65.

439 "Shiite Politics," 22; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 40, 46; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 13, 55.

440 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56.

In a situation like post-Saddam Iraq, with Iranian affiliates openly participating in Iraqi politics, and the young GOI a rare friend to Iran, it has made strategic sense for Iran to work with a number of diverse clients to covertly influence Iraqi society and politics, as well as the Americans.[441] Indeed, the IRGC may have been inspired by its own role in Iranian society—where it is part of a spectrum of conservative forces influencing Iranian politics.[442] The IRGC's political allies like the old Islamic Republic Party (IRP) stand for elections, *hezbollahi* gangs and other "pressure groups" apply street-level influence, and the IRGC and *Basij* act as the guarantors of stability.[443]

Whether inspired by its organizational history or stumbled upon in the course of operations in the complex milieu of post-Saddam Iraq, the IRGCQF's Iraqi brand of diverse-spectrum ECM has been highly successful. American practitioners should seek to understand Iranian practices in order to counter their effectiveness, and to emulate their success.

7. Conclusion

Iranian support to SCIRI, Badr Corps, and the various militias that descended from Badr is a successful case of effective client management.[444] The IRGC built and maintained influence with affiliates and within Iraqi politics over the course of the last 35 years. To do this the IRGC combined and modified the principles of effective client management. IRGC leaders leveraged long-lasting relationships built during a formative period of tight control and integration of the IRGC and its affiliates while fighting the Iran-Iraq War. The Quds Force used the trusted agents they developed during that period of high client dependence to extend sponsor oversight after Badr returned to Iraq.[445] These trusted agents were often placed at the head of new organizations operating along a spectrum of clients.

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441 "Shiite Politics," 22.

442 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 211.

443 Ostovar, "Soldiers," 2–3; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 49, 59, 154–58, 162–63.

444 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14–15.

445 "Shiite Politics," 21.

Ironically, the Shia sectarian ideology that has helped build lasting bonds between the IRGC and its clients has often worked against Iranian interests in Iraq.[446] The Badr Corps' treatment of POWs during the 1980s left lasting scars that undercut SCIRI and Badr's appeal in 1991 and during the OIF era.[447] The failed attempts to seize control of the post-Gulf War uprising had the same effect.[448] Sectarianism, when combined with the relatively free hand the Quds Force gives to trusted affiliates, has benefits but also costs: the IRGCQF probably does not care if the city of Baghdad is ethnically mixed or not, but Badr Corps and other Shiite militias do.[449] Sectarian cleansing in Baghdad and other cities left scars in Sunni psyches.[450] When combined with Maliki's repression, this led to massive blowback and a willingness to view the Islamic State as a necessary evil.[451] Recent PMF propaganda seems to indicate that Iran and its clients have learned the importance of at least controlling *perceptions* of sectarian atrocities, but by sponsoring along sectarian lines (and playing on sectarian themes to build and maintain compatibility), the IRGCQF has contributed to the sectarian warfare currently wracking the Middle East.[452] This situation has had real costs for Iran—including fighting a war to defend the Assad regime from a massive Sunni rebellion, and seeing off the Islamic State's challenge to Shiite Iraq.[453]

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446 Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Roggio, and Toumaj, "Prime Minister Establishes PMF'"; Mamouri, "Why Shiites Are Divided"; Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 238.

447 "Shiite Politics," 19.

448 "Shiite Politics," 6; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57.

449 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 55; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 63–64; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces."

450 "Sectarian Cleansing of Iraq's Sunnis by pro-Iran Militias," *Citizens for Bahrain*, February 1, 2015, https://www.citizensforbahrain.com/index.php/entry/sectarian-cleansing-of-iraq-s-sunnis-by-pro-iran-militias.

451 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 220–21; "Frontline PBS 2014 10 28 The Rise of ISIS - YouTube."

452 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 3; Mark Lynch, "Sectarianism and the Campaign to Retake Fallujah," *Carnegie Middle East Center*, June 17, 2016, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/63834; Roggio, and Toumaj, "Prime Minister Establishes PMF'"; Tollast, "Inside Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units"; Ostovar, "Sectarian Dilemmas"; Ostovar, "Tehran to Mosul"; Garrison, "Popular Mobilization Messaging"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 238.

453 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 225–26.

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VI.   CASE STUDY 2: CUBA AND THE MPLA

A.   INTRODUCTION

In May 1965, the first members of a 250-man Cuban advisory task force began work in Congo-Brazzaville.[454] Their mission was three-fold: most importantly at the time, they were to serve as a regional base and as a reserve for Che Guevara's revolutionary activities in Congo-Kinshasa.[455] Che's mission would quickly fall apart, and the Brazzaville force's secondary mission—training a presidential guard to prevent a coup against President Massamba-Debat—would also be less than an enduring success.[456] However, the advisors' tertiary mission would initiate a long-lasting sponsor-affiliate relationship.[457] The Cuban advisors trained, equipped and occasionally accompanied guerrillas from the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) in their efforts to liberate Angola from Portuguese colonialism.[458] This relationship would wax and wane over the years, but would last until 1991, with Cuban support being essential for the MPLA's survival.[459] Analyzing how the Cubans leveraged the factors of effective client management over the course of their relationship with the MPLA will add detailed nuances to the quantitative chapter's findings. Unlike the previous case study,

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[454] Edward George, *The Cuban Intervention in Angola, 1965–1991: From Che Guevara to Cuito Canavale* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2005), 26, 28; Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study in Soviet Policy in the Third World,* Westview Special Studies on Africa (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1980), 109.

[455] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 26, 28.

[456] George, 28, 30–32, 40–41; Daniel Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention: From Local Bush War to Chronic Crisis in Southern Africa* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1993), 59–60; John A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Volume II: Exile Politics and Guerrilla Warfare* (1962-1976) (Cambridge, Massachussetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1978), 172; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109–10; Fernando Andresen Guimarães, "The Origins of the Angolan Civil War: International Politics and Domestic Conflict, 1961–1976" (doctoral thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, 1992), 297–98.

[457] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; Guimarães, "Origins," 293.

[458] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28–29; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64, 231; Tony Hodges, "The Struggle for Angola: How the World Powers Entered a War in Africa," *The Round Table* 66, no. 262 (1976): 176.

[459] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 1, 28, 274–75; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 110–11, 117; Guimarães, "Origins," 292.

this chapter examines a non-contiguous sponsor-client relationship in which Cuba maintained a strong relationship with only one affiliate, while pursuing different objectives than those pursued by Iran. These inter-case differences demonstrate the diverse way in which successful sponsors may leverage the factors of ECM.

Critically, the MPLA was one of many national liberation movements fighting against the Portuguese.[460] Cuba was also one of many sponsors assisting the MPLA or its competitors.[461] Shortly after Portugal decided to withdraw from its colonies in 1974, these movements renewed the internecine fighting that had characterized their competition during the struggle against the Portuguese.[462] Cuban support increased from the small cadre of advisors that characterized its early efforts on behalf of the MPLA, growing to a massive 65,000-man task force at its strongest.[463] The full weight of the Cuban military was twice brought to bear against the MPLA's competitors and their external backers from Zaire and South Africa.[464]

460 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62–64; Christopher Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," *African Affairs* 75, no. 299 (April 1976): 137.

461 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 10–12; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64.

462 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 55; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 138, 140–41, 161–65; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62.

463 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 1, 28; Hughes puts the number at approximately 50,000 Cubans. Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65; Nathaniel Davis, "The Angola Decision of 1975: A Personal Memoir," *Foreign Affairs* 57, no. 1 (Fall 1978): 122.

464 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 1, 80–81, 210–12; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65, 68, 73, 83–84; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–75; Hodges, "Struggle," 181; Guimarães, "Origins," 292, 319–20; Gerald J. Bender, "Angola, the Cubans, and American Anxieties," *Foreign Policy*, no. 31 (Summer 1978): 3, 12.

The MPLA espoused a brand of independently-minded, racially inclusive socialism that was highly ideologically compatible with Castro's Cuba.[465] However, compatibility of objectives was not always as high. Though the Cubans shared the same broad strategic goal of ensuring MPLA dominance of a liberated and unified Angola, their operational and tactical objectives were not always so closely aligned.[466] The Cubans were but one sponsor cooperating and occasionally competing for primacy in support of the MPLA.[467] With such a massive Cuban war effort, client dependence (CD) was a critical element in the years when the Cubans exercised the most influence over MPLA objectives; but, at other times, the MPLA depended more heavily on the Soviets.[468] Castro's willingness to risk more of his advisors and soldiers at decisive points during the war in Angola was critical in Cuban "coopetition" with the Soviets, but Cuban advantages in the field of sponsor oversight (SO) would also play a key part in Cuban conduct of effective client management (ECM).[469] In supporting the MPLA, the Cubans had many obstacles, not least of which was the often-factionalized nature of

465 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 12; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65; John A. Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution Volume I: The Anatomy of an Explosion (1950-1962),* (Cambridge, Massachussetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), 301; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172, 279; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109, 115, 120, 122; Arthur J. Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," Strategic Issues Research Memorandum, Strategic Issues Research Memoranda Program (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, May 10, 1980), 21; Prexy Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy: Lessons from the Angola Conflict," *Africa Today* 39, no. 1/2 (and 2nd Quarters 1992): 54; Keith Somerville, "Angola: Soviet Client State or State of Socialist Orientation," *Millenium: Journal of International Studies* 13, no. 3 (1984): 294; Hodges, "Struggle," 175–76; Mark Webber, "Soviet Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Final Phase," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 30, no. 1 (March 1992): 21.

466 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 66, 78, 126, 133.

467 George, 183, 191–92, 193, 208–9; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62, 64–65.

468 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 191–92, 193, 208–9, 246–47; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*, 2006, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjuYHFYxhTU, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvEhfVWsqNI; Assis Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy since Independence: The Search for Domestic Security," *African Security Review* 9, no. 3 (2000): 38; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 9; Gennady Shubin, ed., *The Oral History of Forgotten Wars: The Memoirs of Veterans of the War in Angola,* trans. Peter Sidorov (PDF) (Moscow: Memories, 2007), 14–15, http://www.veteranangola.ru/main/english/Oral%20history.

469 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 65–66, 77–78, 158–59, 161; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114, 116–17; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29; "Coopetition," *Investopedia*, accessed August 30, 2017, http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/coopetition.asp.

Neto's movement.[470] The Cubans consistently strengthened President Agostinho Neto's hand in conflicts with enemies—both internal and external.[471] The ultimate Cuban agreement to withdraw from Angola was not taken because of MPLA defiance or desertion. Rather, it was a negotiated peace settlement, which Castro was able to achieve while maintaining his prestige and honor.[472] He was able to do this because he had manipulated the factors of ECM to impose his will on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.[473]

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470 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28, 45, 46, 52–53, 113, 126–30; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 45–46, 77–81.

471 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28, 46, 126–30, 274; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64; Bender, "Angola," 26; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114, 131; Guimarães, "Origins," 308.

472 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 243–55.

473 George, 66, 78, 176–77, 181–82, 210–11, 246–47.

Figure 11. Map of Angola.[474]

B.   THE BEGINNING OF THE RELATIONSHIP

The Cubans likely had contact with the MPLA through their embassies or missions in Africa prior to 1965 (both the Cubans and MPLA enjoyed close relations with Ben Bella's government in Algeria).[475] The relationship may go back to both parties' roots as revolutionary movements meeting at Lisbon's Imperial Student House—

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474 "Administrative Map of Angola," Nations Online Project, accessed August 31, 2017, http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/angola_map2.htm.

475 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 76; Guimarães, "Origins," 293–94.

a center of revolutionary activity.[476] However, the first major Cuban contact with the MPLA occurred in 1965, during Che Guevara's tour of Africa.[477] Che met with many African liberation movements, and though he was clearly more interested in the prospect of establishing a *"guerrilla madre"* in the eastern Congo, he endorsed Neto's request for Cuban support.[478] Shortly thereafter, a Cuban advisor task force under Rolando Kindelan with Jorge Risquet as commissar arrived in Brazzaville.[479] While training, equipping and advising the then-struggling MPLA was a tertiary task for the Cubans, it would grow in importance over time.[480]

In 1965, both the MPLA and revolutionary Cuba were far different than they would be at the end of the relationship.[481] The MPLA was at that time one of a collection of national liberation movements competing for the support of both the Angolan people and external sponsors.[482] Its primary competitor was Holden Roberto's *Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola* (FNLA), a nationalist movement drawn primarily from Northern Angola's Bakongo population.[483] The FNLA was already supported by Congo-Kinshasa, but when Mobutu (to whom Roberto was related by marriage) seized power, he stepped up Zairian support.[484] Jonas Savimbi, who would go on to be the longest struggling opponent of the MPLA, was in the political wilderness at the time.[485] In 1965, Savimbi would form the *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*

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476 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22.

477 George, 21–23; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 110; Guimarães, "Origins," 294–95.

478 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 21, 22–25; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54; Guimarães, "Origins," 294–95; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172.

479 One of the first advisors to arrive was a young Rafael Moracen, who would play a decisive role 12 years later. George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 25–29; Guimarães, "Origins," 294–96.

480 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28, 32.

481 George, 274–77.

482 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62, 64–73; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8–11.

483 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8–11; Steven F. Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy: The Case of Angola and Mozambique, 1961–93," *The China Quarterly*, no. 142 (June 1995): 389; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63.

484 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 10, 31; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 61, 63.

485 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 23; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 77, 84–85.

(UNITA), drawing support from his Ovimbundu co-ethnics—the single largest ethnic group in Angola.[486] Though UNITA would grow into a potent force in the future, in the 1960s it was marginal, enjoying limited training support from communist China, and seeking at various times to unify with the FNLA.[487] These large politico-military groups were not the only elements opposing the Portuguese. There were also a number of smaller organizations, as well as Cabindan separatists[488]

The MPLA was the most cosmopolitan of all the national liberation movements.[489] Its leaders were drawn from the Luanda elite of *mestiços* and *assimilados*, and its base of popular support lay in Luanda and among the Mbundu people who lived in and around Luanda, especially in the Dembos hills to the east.[490] The MPLA was avowedly inclusive, inviting whites, blacks and *mestiços* to participate.[491] Its leftist leanings were likely due to the fact that many of its Portuguese-educated leaders had been involved with the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)—which, due to its underground nature, was the only effective opposition to Portugal's repressive regime.[492] Since 1962, the MPLA had been led by Agostinho Neto, a medical doctor and poet, who had become a kind of celebrity due to his imprisonment and subsequent escape from Portuguese

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486 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 101–2; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 6, 23; Hughes, My Enemy's Enemy, 62–63, 74; Bender, "Angola," 18–20.

487 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 23, 62–63, 91, 114; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62–63, 71–72.

488 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 56–60; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 10; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 82–89.

489 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 37–38; Christine M. Knudsen, and I. William Zartman, "The Large Small War in Angola," *Annals, AAPSS*, no. 541 (September 1995): 132.

490 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 5, 8, 9, 127; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 12–13; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I,* 37–40; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 197; Joane Nagel and Brad Whorton, "Ethnic Conflict and the World System: International Competition in Iraq (1961-1991) and Angola (1974-1991)," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 20, no. 1 (Summer 1992): 16; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 138; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 389; Knudsen, and Zartman, "The Large Small War," 132.

491 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8, 127; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 11–13; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 279; Nagel and Whorton, "Ethnic Conflict," 16; Knudsen, and Zartman, "The Large Small War," 132.

492 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 10–13.

captivity.[493] At the time of Che's meeting with Neto, the MPLA was far from healthy.[494] In 1962, the popular former MPLA General Secretary Viriato da Cruz—who had close ties to the Chinese—was expelled from the MPLA after challenging Neto.[495] Neto's leadership was then challenged in 1963 after he formed a united front with a number of Bakongo organizations—some of which were tainted by collaboration with the Portuguese.[496] Though da Cruz was expelled from the MPLA, the scars of the 1963 challenge were just healing in 1965, with key MPLA members like Mario de Andrade returning to the fold.[497] Thus, COE remained fairly weak for the MPLA.[498]

Client organizational enforcement was not, however, the MPLA's biggest problem in 1965. Having lost the competition with Roberto for Kinshasa's favor, the MPLA was expelled, and had to set up shop in Brazzaville.[499] The presence of a competing local sponsor had saved the MPLA from completely losing its sanctuary, but with Congo-Brazzaville only sharing a border with the Cabinda exclave, the MPLA had lost easy access to the Angolan mainland.[500] In addition to Congo-Brazzaville, Algeria, and Cuba, the MPLA also received limited support from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia

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493 Spikes, 11–13, 22–23, 45; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Don Barnett, and Roy Harvey, *The Revolution in Angola: MPLA, Life Histories and Documents* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1972), 41; Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 253–56; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 37–40, 263–67.

494 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22–23.

495 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 45–46; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 126; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 254–55, 299–300; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 87, 90–92, 156–57; Guimarães, "Origins," 427–28, 441; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 396; Barnett, and Harvey, *The Revolution in Angola*, 259.

496 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 46; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 80–84, 85–87.

497 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 122–23, 169–70.

498 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 30–35; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 98–99; Gerald J. Bender, "The Eagle and the Bear in Angola," *Annals, AAPSS*, no. 489 (January 1987): 127.

499 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 46; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 121–23, 173; Hodges, "Struggle," 176; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 138.

500 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 138; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 92, 122–23, 174.

and even Communist China (at least rhetorically) during the 1960s.[501] The Organization of African Unity (OAU) also recognized the MPLA—making it eligible for money from the OAU's liberation fund.[502]

Cuba in 1965 was a revolutionary regime.[503] Its leaders, like Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, were charged with internationalist ideology.[504] They advocated opposition to the United States and other imperialists in solidarity with revolutionary and socialist regimes throughout the third world.[505] Indeed, Castro and Guevara saw this not just as an ideological duty, but as a way to tie down the imperialists, which Guevara believed was the only way to secure the Cuban revolution in the long run.[506] The Cubans had already demonstrated that their international solidarity was more than rhetorical in 1963, when they dispatched an expeditionary force to Algeria to back up Ben Bella in his border dispute with Morocco.[507] Heavily dependent on the USSR, the Cubans nevertheless had their differences with the Soviets.[508] The Soviets were traditionally less militant in exporting revolution, especially in Latin America, where the communist parties followed Moscow's line, not Havana's.[509] Though Castro resented the Soviets for their unilateral decision to withdraw nuclear weapons from Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis, Che

501 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 56; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 73; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 243; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 56; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 76, 172, 230; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 20; Giles Mohan, and Marcus Power, "New African Choices? The Politics of Chinese Engagement," *Review of African Political Economy* 35, no. 115 (2008): 29; Somerville, "Angola," 297; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 393–94, 401; Hodges, "Struggle," 175.

502 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 170–71, 227; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 12.

503 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 14; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*.

504 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 14, 17–19; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 53–54; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109, 115; Nagel, and Whorton, "Ethnic Conflict," 18–19; Guimarães, "Origins," 293, 301–3.

505 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 14, 17; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65; Guimarães, "Origins," 302–3; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 115.

506 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 17–18, 42; Guimarães, "Origins," 302–3; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65.

507 Guimarães, "Origins," 303–5; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 20–21; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 110.

508 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 19, 41–42; Arkady Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 142–43; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54.

509 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 25, 42; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 142–43.

went even further—publicly questioning the Soviets and hinting preference for the more revolutionary Chinese.[510] With Che's economic policies failing in Cuba, and his outspokenness attracting ire from Cuba's most important patron, Castro sent the famous revolutionary to Africa, where he would once again go underground, working as a guerrilla.[511] The objective of Che's 1964–1965 African tour was to build support for his upcoming Congo mission.[512] The ideology of Neto and the MPLA was highly compatible with Cuba's socialist ideology, but MPLA objectives were less compatible with those of Guevara, who wanted to fight in Congo first—spreading revolution outward from there.[513] Their objectives were not incompatible, though, and Castro agreed to train the MPLA in Brazzaville.[514]

C.   SIGNIFICANT TRANSITION POINTS AND PHASES

1.   1965–1967: The Brazzaville Years

The first members of Kindelan and Risquet's 250-man advisor force arrived in Brazzaville in May 1965, as Guevara's 120-man force was travelling in the Eastern Congo.[515] Che's Congo mission quickly fell apart, and Guevara was forced to leave the theater in shame.[516] This shifted the Cuban focus to Brazzaville, where the lines of effort in support of Massamba-Debat and Neto now took top priority.[517] Cuban and MPLA objectives were naturally coming closer into alignment, but the situation on the ground

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510 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 19–20, 42; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 124–25; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54.

511 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 19–20, 21–22, 25; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 124–25, 142–43; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54–55.

512 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 21–25; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 53–54.

513 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 21–22; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 54.

514 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 23; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109.

515 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 25–26, 28, 30.

516 George, 30–31; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 55.

517 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 30–32; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 59–60; Hodges, "Struggle," 176.

was still difficult for the MPLA's guerrillas.[518] The Cubans immediately began advising and even accompanying units of the MPLA mounting incursions into Cabinda—the MPLA's Second Military Region.[519] The advisors quickly realized that these limited incursions would never evolve into a sustained guerrilla campaign.[520] The difficult terrain of the Mayombe jungle on the Cabindan border was simply too rough and remote to facilitate easy movement, and the MPLA did not enjoy local support.[521] Cabindan villagers and refugees preferred Cabindan separatists to the mostly Mbundu MPLA fighters.[522] Thus, Cabinda served as a training area for the infiltrating MPLA and its advisors to develop tactical guerrilla skills.[523] It was in Cabinda that the Cuban advisors first developed their disgust with the MPLA's factionalism and frequent lack of fighting spirit—as ethnic and tribal differences led to an occasionally deadly lack of cohesion among the guerrillas.[524]

Realizing the Second Military Region's limited potential, the Cubans shifted their effort to training and equipping a relief column for the First Military Region—located deep behind hostile lines in the Dembos hills.[525] Led by Jacob Caetano, a formidable military leader who took the nom de guerre Monstro Imortal, the members of this relief column chose to honor their Cuban advisors by naming the column after Camilo Cienfuegos.[526] The 100-man Camilo Cienfuegos Column successfully crossed through southern Zaire and Northern Angola, bypassing the hostile forces of the Zairian military, the FNLA (who had been ambushing and killing MPLA units crossing the borderlands

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518 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28–30.

519 George, 28–29.

520 George, 30; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 174–76.

521 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 29; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 174–76.

522 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 29; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 174–76, 205.

523 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 29–30, 40; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 174.

524 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 29, 155.

525 George, 30, 32–33; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 176.

526 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 32–33; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 176.

since 1961) and the Portuguese military.[527] The column's success raised the spirits of the MPLA's struggling First Region, and demonstrated the worth of the Cuban advisors' train-and-equip program.[528]

The success of the Camilo Cienfuegos column was not, however, to be replicated.[529] The second column suffered a number of blunders during its disastrous infiltration, and only 21 of its 150 guerrillas reached the Dembos.[530] The rest, having been forced to turn back, were killed or captured by the FNLA.[531] Later columns would suffer similar fates, leaving the guerrillas in the Dembos isolated until 1974.[532] Without oversight from either their Cuban sponsors or the MPLA leadership, and besieged by both the FNLA and the Portuguese, Monstro Imortal and his lieutenants like Nito Alves would form tight bonds with each other and their men.[533] These bonds would serve the MPLA well during the war for independence and its aftermath, but would cause factionalism in the long run—hurting the MPLA's COE.[534]

Neto visited Havana for the Tricontinental Conference in 1966, and was honored by the Cubans.[535] However, Amilcar Cabral, the charismatic revolutionary leader from Guinea-Bissau received more attention.[536] Nevertheless, the visit cemented the

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527 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 32–33; Oleg Ignatyev, *Secret Weapon in Africa,* trans. David Fidlon (USSR: Progress Publishing, 1977), 46–50; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 42, 60; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 210–19; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 176–77.

528 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 33; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60.

529 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 36–40; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60; Paul Fauvet, "The Rise and Fall of Nito Alves," *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 9, Southern Africa (August 1977): 88–89.

530 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 36–39; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 88.

531 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 37, 39.

532 George, 39–40, 45, 127; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 88–89.

533 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45, 127; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 88–89.

534 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45, 127.

535 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 33–34; Guimarães, "Origins," 300; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 110.

536 George, The Cuban Intervention, 34.

.developing relationship between the MPLA and revolutionary Cuba by establishing a personal bond between Castro and Neto.[537]

Figure 12.   Castro and Neto.[538]

The Cuban and MPLA relationship appeared to be maturing in 1966, when Massamba-Debat survived a coup attempt led by paratroopers in Congo-Brazzaville.[539] MPLA fighters joined their Cuban advisors in supporting the Cuban-trained presidential guard to put down the coup attempt.[540]

2.   1967–1974: Second-Country Training and Institutionalization

Cabinda's lack of support for a persistent MPLA presence, combined with the increasing difficulty of reaching the First Military Region deep inside Angola, led the MPLA to shift its effort eastward, deciding to open offices in Lusaka, and start a new

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537 George, 34–35.

538 "Fidel-y-Neto-2.Png (PNG Image, 240 × 281 Pixels)," *JSC: Jamaicans in Solidarity with Cuba*, accessed August 31, 2017, https://youthandeldersja.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/fidel-y-neto-2.png.

539 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 35; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60.

540 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 35–36; Guimarães, "Origins," 298; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60.

military region across the Zambian frontier.[541] Unfortunately for the Cuban advisors, Lusaka refused to allow a Cuban presence inside Zambia.[542] President Kenneth Kaunda was concerned about provoking adjacent countries.[543] The MPLA did not completely leave Brazzaville, but it became a secondary base, and the Cubans had soured on training and equipping ill-fated relief columns.[544] In the East, the MPLA quickly outcompeted Savimbi's UNITA to become Lusaka's favored Angolan rebel group.[545] MPLA cadres infiltrated remote Eastern Angola in 1966, and their new Third Military Region was conducting operations before the year's end.[546] As the MPLA was shifting its focus, the Cubans were also shifting theirs.[547] They expanded their advisory effort in support of Cabral's *Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde* (PAIGC) from bases in Conakry.[548] The Cubans withdrew from Congo-Brazzaville in July 1967, but their African embassies continued the relationship with the MPLA, and the Cubans continued to bring MPLA cadres and students to Cuba for military and civil education.[549]

The period from 1967–1974 saw the MPLA and Cuba grow more distant.[550] This was not just due to the geographical separation of their forces in Africa.[551] Both sides were also internally focused during this period.[552] With Che's death in Bolivia and the

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541 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 30, 35, 40, 45; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 56, 60; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 168–69, 177–78.

542 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 35.

543 George, 35; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 51–52.

544 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 40, 45; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60.

545 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 64; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 168–69, 177–78.

546 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 56, 60, 64; Barnett, and Harvey, *The Revolution in Angola*, 254; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 138; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 177–78; Guimarães, "Origins," 299; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45.

547 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 34, 40.

548 George, 34, 40.

549 George, 35, 40–41, 44; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 111.

550 Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 244; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 40–41, 45; Guimarães, "Origins," 300–301.

551 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 40–41, 45.

552 George, 41, 44–45, 47.

failure of many of Cuba's revolutionary projects in Latin America, Castro was bowing to pressure (including an oil embargo) from the Soviet Union to conform to the Soviet model for socialism.[553] This was the period of "Institutionalization" in Cuba.[554] Castro was consolidating his hold on power while transforming his party to be more like that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[555]

Likewise, Neto was struggling with the problem of leading a diverse revolutionary movement spread over three non-contiguous military regions in Angola, and three bases for the government-in-exile: Lusaka, Brazzaville and Dar-es-Salaam.[556] His already fragmented movement was also facing stepped-up military pressure from capable Portuguese commanders.[557] The Third Military Region had initially been ignored by the Portuguese, as it was operating in a sparsely populated, economically insignificant wasteland.[558] Under the leadership of Daniel Chipenda, an easterner, the Third Region quickly established itself as the MPLA's most successful guerrilla front.[559] In 1968, the Portuguese mounted their first offensive in Eastern Angola, a foretaste of what was to come.[560] In 1972 and 1973, the Portuguese crushed the fighters of the Third Region, who had grown complacent.[561] Military defeat exacerbated tensions between easterners and MPLA officers and leaders from other regions of the country.[562] Neto did not adequately

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553 George, 41–43; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 115.

554 George, *The Cuban Intervention,* 43.

555 George, 42–43.

556 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 197, 199–200; George, 46–47; Barnett, and Harvey, *The Revolution in Angola*, 250.

557 Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion*, 8; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 30–35; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45–46; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 64–66; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 127.

558 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 64–66; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45–46.

559 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 56, 64.

560 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 65–66; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 200–01.

561 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 201; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 64, 76–77; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 45.

562 Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 237; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 197, 201; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 76–77; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46.

address these growing rifts, preferring to blame Chipenda, who likewise blamed the MPLA's privileged exile leadership for the region's military problems.[563] The ill-will on both sides brought Chipenda to lead the Eastern Revolt against Neto's leadership in 1973.[564] This was followed shortly by the Active Revolt of exile political figures in Brazzaville, including Mario de Andrade.[565] Distressed by brutal factional fighting inside Zambia, Kaunda and the presidents of other pro-MPLA African countries brokered a series of meetings of the feuding MPLA leaders.[566] Active Revolt returned to the fold, but Chipenda ended up fleeing to Zaire with thousands of his fighters.[567] One of the key voices in support of Neto at this time was Nito Alves, now a rising star from the Dembos.[568] Alves had started as Monstro Imortal's lieutenant, but had risen to command the region when Caetano was recalled outside the Dembos.[569]

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563 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 201–4; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 76–77; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46.

564 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46–47; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 76–78.

565 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 204, 248; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 47, 52–53; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 140; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 83–84, 100–101.

566 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 249–51; Kaunda was particularly disgusted to learn that Neto's men had tortured and executed members of Chipenda's faction in Zambia by crushing their skulls. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 82–83, 101, 108–11.

567 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 55; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 250–51; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 109–11; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 127.

568 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 127; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 111–12; Bender, "Angola," 23; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89–90.

569 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89.

Figure 13.   Daniel Chipenda (left) and Nito Alves (Right).[570]

With Neto's own organization losing faith in his leadership, along with Kaunda and other OAU members, it is not surprising that the Soviet Union cut Neto off from their support in 1973.[571] It is even possible that the USSR backed Chipenda's revolt.[572] However, the Soviets did warn Neto that he was the target of an assassination plot by Chipenda's faction.[573] Thus, it seems more likely that the Soviets were simply suspending aid to limit liability while growing weary of the MPLA's weak COE, and were following the OAU's lead in growing skeptical of Neto and his organization.[574]

570 "Daniel Chipenda," *Alchetron, The Free Social Encyclopedia, Alchetron.com*, January 18, 2014, https://alchetron.com/Daniel-Chipenda-753014-W; "Com Menta," accessed October 15, 2017, http://com-menta.blogspot.com/2007/05/27-de-maio-de-1977-ocorreu-em-angola-o.html.

571 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46–47, 53; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 81–83; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 201, 229; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 127; Bender, "Angola," 23; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 55; Somerville, "Angola," 295; Guimarães, "Origins," 418–19; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 243.

572 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 242–43; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 127; Guimarães, "Origins," 418–19; Colin Legum, "The Soviet Union, China and the West in Southern Africa," *Foreign Affairs* 54 (1975): 749; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

573 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 201; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 82, 108.

574 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46–47, 52–53; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 227, 229; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 81–82; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 55; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 127; Guimarães, "Origins," 418–19; Vladimir Shubin, "Unsung Heroes: The Soviet Military and the Liberation of Southern Africa," *Cold War History* 7, no. 2 (May 2007): 257–58; Vladimir Shubin, and Andrei Tokarev, "War in Angola: A Soviet Dimension," *Review of African Political Economy*, 28, no. 90 (2001): 612; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 401–2; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 4–5.

The up-and-down Soviet and OAU relationship with Neto contrasts sharply with the MPLA's other external sponsors.[575] Yugoslavia was perhaps the most consistent ally for the MPLA during this period, providing shipments of materiel, though its activity in support of the MPLA would fade in importance over time.[576] Also, though Castro was distracted by Institutionalization—the process by which Cuba transitioned to Soviet-style communism—he met with the MPLA in Conakry during his 1972 African tour, continuing his support to Neto's faction.[577] The Cubans maintained their limited Cuba-based training program for the MPLA throughout Neto's troubles.[578]

In 1974, the MPLA was extremely weak compared to its perennial competitor the FNLA, which was receiving lavish support from Mobutu, advice and assistance from the Chinese, and would soon be supported covertly (again) by the CIA.[579] Luckily for Neto, events in Portugal would completely change the situation in Angola and the rest of Lusophone Africa.[580] On 25 April, the *Movimiento das Forças Armadas* (MFA)—a group of disaffected, left-leaning junior officers—succeeded in its second coup attempt against Caetano, the long-ruling dictator of Portugal.[581] The Portuguese people came out in the streets to support the MFA.[582] This was the Carnation Revolution.[583] Over the course of the year, the MFA's more left-leaning elements succeeded in their struggle for control of Portugal's government.[584] These leftist officers were close with the MPLA's

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575 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 53; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 227, 229; Guimarães, "Origins," 308.

576 Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 243–44, 348; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 73; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 56; Hodges, "Struggle," 180.

577 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 42–47.

578 George, 35, 44; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 225; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 244.

579 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 47–51, 54; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 402; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63, 65, 68; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 262–63, 265.

580 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 47–50; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 96–100.

581 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 49–50; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 90, 96–99; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 7.

582 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 98–99.

583 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 48, 50; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 98–99.

584 The MFA would eventually lose power to the Portuguese right. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 103, 114, 176–77; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 8–9.

old friends the Portuguese communists (whose leader Alvaro Cunhal was a staunch ally of the Kremlin).[585] More importantly, they favored swift independence for the colonies.[586] On the ground in Angola, the various rebel groups signed ceasefires with the Portuguese, and were soon establishing an open presence in Luanda and in their respective areas of control.[587] The MPLA received preferential treatment during the post-coup governorship of Admiral Rosa Coutinho.[588]

3.   1974–1976: Independence and the First Cuban Surge

With the change in Portuguese government creating a new, more permissive environment in Angola, the rebel groups began establishing their dominance and control over different regions of the country.[589] The MPLA quickly seized Cabinda.[590] It also extended influence into Luanda.[591] Nito Alves, the MPLA commander from the Dembos, infiltrated Luanda, and allied with Jose Van Dunem, who had established a strong network among the captured fighters in Luanda's prisons.[592] With the Portuguese releasing these prisoners, Van Dunem and Alves had the core of an urban network for Luanda.[593] They also made contact with the various *Podar Popular* groups emerging

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585 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 56–57, 103; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 226; Guimarães, "Origins," 414–15; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 610–11, 612; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 7–8; Hodges, "Struggle," 175.

586 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 47, 49–50; Adrian Guelke, "Southern Africa and the Super-Powers," *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944- 56, no. 4 (Autumn 1980): 655; Knudsen, and Zartman, "The Large Small War," 132.

587 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 52–53, 54–55; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 120–21, 201; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 404–5.

588 Coutinho had suffered earlier in his career when he was captured by Roberto's guerrillas. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 107, 111, 121; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 55; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 252–53; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Guimarães, "Origins," 321–22; Hodges, "Struggle," 180.

589 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 55; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 252–53, 259, 261; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 111, 122.

590 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 122; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 140; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 261.

591 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 85, 111–12.

592 Spikes, 85, 111–12; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89.

593 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 111–12; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89.

around the capital.[594] These neighborhood militias were generally aligned with local hoodlums and power-brokers, and sprang up to protect the residents of their neighborhoods—the *musseques*—during the racial violence that briefly engulfed Luanda in 1974.[595] Though not initially controlled by the MPLA, the *Podar Popular* groups shared Nito Alves's radical ideology (and may have helped to radicalize him further).[596] They were also armed by the MPLA, as Eastern Bloc weapons began flowing into the capital.[597]

Though Neto, Roberto and Savimbi signed the Alvor Accords on 15 January 1975, pledging to create a unity transitional government prior to pre-independence elections, that agreement quickly fell apart.[598] As FNLA units began to appear in and around Luanda, they were attacked by *Podar Popular* groups.[599] Likewise, in Northern Angola the FNLA exercised its traditional authority while receiving increasing levels of support from Zaire, the Chinese and the CIA.[600] Savimbi may have been the only commander who truly embraced the agreements—likely due to his military weakness and to his popularity among the widespread Ovimbundu.[601] Minor clashes soon turned to open fighting, with the first major attack being the MPLA's assault on Chipenda's offices in Luanda, which forced the factional leader to seek alliance with Roberto's FNLA and with the South African Defense Force (SADF)—who would soon intervene to prevent a socialist, pro-SWAPO regime being established on the Namibian border.[602] Chipenda's

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594 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 112; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 90–91.

595 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 103–4, 112, 121–22; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 90–91; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 139–40.

596 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 143; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 279.

597 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 121–22, 143–44, 146–47.

598 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 56, 58–60; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 128.

599 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 138.

600 ; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 137–38, 141; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 58–59; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65, 68, 72.

601 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 137.

602 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 59, 62–63; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64, 66–68; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 258; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 140–41; Hodges, "Struggle," 177.

fighters would go on to form the core of the SADF's famous 32 Battalion.[603] Following their eviction of Chipenda's faction, the MPLA and Alves's *Podar Popular* allies succeeded in pushing the FNLA out of the capital.[604]

Owning Luanda gave the MPLA pole position in the struggle for legitimacy as the post-independence government (Portuguese forces were largely passive in the face of this emerging civil war, as they were focused on the drama in Portugal).[605] However, the MPLA would have to hold the capital through independence day (11 November 1975) to reap the benefits of this control, and there were significant threats arrayed against it.[606] The FNLA still controlled the North, and with significant external support was positioning its military to seize Luanda.[607] The FNLA's position on the Zairian border allowed its sponsors to flow material in to FNLA troops in Angola.[608] Meanwhile, the MPLA in Luanda was hostage to Portuguese control of the port, and the Soviets were loath to overtly challenge the fictions of Portuguese sovereignty and the Alvor Accords.[609] Thus, Soviet aid was initially brought in through covert flights from Congo-Brazzaville, limiting its relevance when compared to the arsenal Roberto was amassing.[610] Nevertheless, the Soviets did begin providing the MPLA with new heavy

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603 Ronald Dreyer, *Namibia & Southern Africa: Regional Dynamics of Decolonization, 1945–1990* (Geneva: Routledge [Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva], 1994), https://books.google.com/books?id=Z7EWDAAAQBAJ&q=32+battalion#v=snippet&q=32%20battalion&f=false

604 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 59–60; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 259–60; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 404–5; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 143, 146, 161–65.

605 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 59–60; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention,* 177.

606 George, *The Cuban Intervention,* 56, 60–63.

607 George, 59–60.

608 George, 59; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 145, 178.

609 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 61; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 145, 177–78.

610 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 61; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; S*pikes, Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 145; Legum, "The Soviet Union," 750–51; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 259.

weaponry.[611] Until independence, however, the Soviets refused to deploy advisors or technical experts to Angola.[612]

Neto was stuck. He needed external advisors to help the *Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola* (FAPLA)—the recently formed MPLA army—craft an effective defense against the threatening FNLA forces, and he also needed those advisors to have expertise with the latest Soviet weaponry that his guerrilla army was receiving.[613] Neto requested help from his old friend Castro.[614] Cuba was emerging from the period of Institutionalization so Castro could again look outward.[615] Also, as a reward for Castro's compliance, the Soviets had fielded the Cuban military with the most advanced weaponry available outside the Warsaw Pact—the same weaponry which Angola would soon receive.[616] Finally, Latin America had proved to be less than receptive to Cuban internationalism, so Castro was again willing to expand his efforts in Africa.[617]

In December 1974, Castro dispatched Carlos Cadelo and Alfonso Perez to assess the MPLA prior to committing to the deployment of advisors.[618] They returned to Havana with a very positive endorsement of the MPLA.[619] Still, Castro delayed, prompting Neto to make a second request, which went unfulfilled.[620] The Cubans may have simply been making diplomatic preparations for their deployment, so as to maintain a veneer of legality—Admiral Rosa Coutinho (the MPLA's Portuguese booster) visited

611 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 60–61; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 146–47.

612 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 63, 65, 79, 101; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 146–47.

613 George, 63–65, 350–51; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 146–47; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 252; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 112.

614 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 56; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 147; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 245; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273.

615 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 43.

616 George, 43, 63; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 111–12.

617 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 20, 43; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 110, 115.

618 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 56–57; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 245.

619 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 57.

620 George, 57, 63; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 250.

Havana in June.[621] Thus, when Neto made a third request in July, Castro sent an envoy to Lisbon to secure Portuguese approval for his intervention.[622] Official approval was not forthcoming, but Coutinho again traveled to Cuba in August, which was when Castro gave his final approval for the deployment of Cuban advisors.[623] Castro had also deployed 50 weapons specialists early.[624] They arrived on 25 July to begin training FAPLA on the Russian weapons, which the Soviets began shipping directly to Luanda in July.[625]

The first Cubans to arrive in Angola settled on a plan for 94 Cuban advisors to train and advise FAPLA.[626] However, having decided to support the MPLA, Castro was committed to doing it right—he unilaterally expanded the advisor task force to a 480-man element with Cuban materiel, as well as logistical, medical and communications enablers.[627] The Cuban advanced party for the advisory task force arrived in Angola in August and September while the main body prepared to deploy.[628] The Soviets denied Cuban requests for support in deploying the task force due to concerns about foreign boots on the ground prior to 11 November.[629] Neto was very pleased to have Cuban support, and was soon deferring to Castro's operational objectives: the increasing compatibility of Cuban and MPLA objectives reflected Neto's growing client

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621 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 64; Spikes has Colonel Otelo Saravia de Carvalho making the trip. Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 176, 245–46; Alternatively, the Cubans may have been slow to intervene because they were still internally focused. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 256–57; Guimaraes has both Carvalho and Coutinho in Cuba. Guimarães, "Origins," 309–10, 322.

622 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 63–64; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 111.

623 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 64.

624 George, 64; *Hughes, My Enemy's Enemy*, 65.

625 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 61, 64; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 111–12; Guimarães, "Origins," 312.

626 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 64.

627 George, 64–65; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202; Guimarães, "Origins," 313–14.

628 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 65; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 111–12.

629 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 65; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 260; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 613.

dependence.[630] The first example of this was Castro's insistence on establishing the strongest Cuban presence in oil and timber-rich Cabinda.[631] Neto had previously planned on losing this isolated exclave to his opponents.[632] The Cubans were able to prevail on their reluctant allies the Soviets to assist in deploying Cuban advisors to Cabinda—support which was not otherwise forthcoming.[633] By 20 October, the main body of Cuban advisors was on the ground, and had established three of their four planned training camps.[634]

The arrival of Cuban advisors proved to be timely, as they were soon engaged in combat. Cuban troops faced SADF troops for the first time on 5 October.[635] The Cubans were also concerned by the FNLA presence in the key terrain around Caxito and Quifangondo just north of Luanda.[636] By November, opposing forces in three separate areas threatened the Cubans.[637] UNITA and the SADF were in the south; FNLA and the Zairians were in the north; a force of Cabindan separatists from the *Front de Libération de l'Enclave de Cabinda* (FLEC) partnered with Mobutu's regulars was positioned just across the border in Zaire.[638] Feeling this pressure, the Cuban commander advised Neto to request major Cuban reinforcements, which Neto did.[639] Castro immediately acceded, launching Operation Carlota, a massive conventional deployment.[640] It is easy to understand Castro's reasoning: his small task force of advisors was threatened with

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630 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 66; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202.

631 George, 3, 66, 161; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 78.

632 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 66.

633 George, 65, 66.

634 George, 67; Guimarães, "Origins," 321.

635 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 68–69.

636 George, 73–74.

637 George, 76–77.

638 George, 77, 351.

639 George, 77; Guimarães, "Origins," 317–18.

640 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 77; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65, 73; Guimarães, "Origins," 317–19; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–75.

annihilation, and he needed to protect his men, as well as his allies.[641] Indeed, Carlota may have been a contingency plan.[642] A defeat in Angola would not only have been a human tragedy for the Cuban servicemen caught there, it could also have ended Castro's "role as supreme Cuban leader and unofficial spokesman for the Third World."[643]

Castro acted decisively to prop up the MPLA, cancelling Neto's panicked plans to withdraw to Cabinda.[644] He also failed to consult the Soviets, whose Ambassador to Guinea learned that Cuban planes would be passing through Conakry to refuel, and informed the Kremlin that something was afoot—tipping them off about Operation Carlota.[645] The Soviets were surprised by Castro's decision, and upset that he had not consulted with them.[646] The Kremlin was trying to limit visibility until after 11 November, and was also concerned with preserving détente—especially since Brezhnev had a trip to America planned.[647] However, presented with a *fait accompli* by their only ally in the western hemisphere, the Soviets grudgingly went along—after all, Castro was assuming all the risk, and if the gamble paid off it would also benefit the USSR.[648] Thus, Castro's decisive action would shape the military objectives of his local affiliate, while enabling him to take the lead position in a coalition of external sponsors.

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641 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 77–78.

642 Guimarães, "Origins," 320–21.

643 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 78.

644 George, 78.

645 George, 79–80; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 613.

646 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 79; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Shubin, "Unsung Heroes," 258; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 373–74, 379; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 127; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 613; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Guimarães, "Origins," 310–11.

647 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 79–80; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 613; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 260.

648 Edward George uses gambling as a metaphor when discussing Castro's high-risk, high-reward approach in 1975. I think the metaphor is apt, and have followed his lead in using it here. Castro's "all-in" approach in 1975 (and 1988) makes for an interesting contrast with that of the IRGC, who often seemed to hedge their bets in Iraq. George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 101, 113; Guimarães, "Origins," 293, 323–26; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 373–74; Sam C. Nolutshungu, "Soviet Involvement in Southern Africa," *Annals, AAPSS*, 481 (September 1985): 141–42; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117–20; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*.

Operation Carlota proceeded along two lines of effort, and there was a Cuban element responsible for each.[649] The first line of effort was securing Luanda.[650] The FNLA was dangerously close to the capital, and whoever held it on independence day would have a massive boost in international legitimacy.[651] Castro turned to his most elite special forces to achieve this goal, airlifting a battalion from the Ministry of Interior (MININT) that was specially selected, trained and equipped for internationalist missions in support of local partners.[652] The MININT special forces began arriving on 8 November, just in time to defend Luanda.[653] The second line of effort in Operation Carlota was to launch a counteroffensive, securing all of Angola under MPLA control.[654] This would be achieved by a sealifted force of conventional Cuban troops, which would naturally be slower in arriving.[655]

The first decisive battle of the Angolan civil war would occur in tiny Cabinda from 8 November to 13 November, where the small force of Cuban advisors had taken command of the FAPLA troops on the ground.[656] The Cubans planned and led the defense.[657] Fighting alongside their partners, the Cubans stopped the advance of FLEC guerrillas and Zairian regulars.[658] The FAPLA troops and Cuban advisors launched a counteroffensive on 12 November, reaching the border by the next day, and ending the conventional threat to Angola's most economically important (and most isolated) province.[659]

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649 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 80–81.

650 George, 80.

651 George, 60, 73–74, 91.

652 George, 81; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 244–46.

653 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 82; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 244–46.

654 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 80–81.

655 George, 80–81.

656 George, 82–83; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 241.

657 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 82–83.

658 George, 83–86; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 241.

659 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 86; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 241; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 78; Somerville, "Angola," 304.

On 10 November, the Portuguese—preparing to leave, despite the continued fighting—announced that Angola would be independent at midnight.[660] On 11 November, over 20 countries immediately recognized Neto's newly independent People's Republic of Angola (PRA).[661] Meanwhile, MININT special forces and BM-21 rocket artillery carried the day in a truly decisive battle against the FNLA and their Zairian allies at Quifangondo in the north, and soon afterward Cuban forces delayed and then stopped a much more effective advance by the SADF and UNITA in the south.[662] Adding insult to injury, reporters from Reuters and British Independent Television News created a diplomatic crisis for the South African government by reporting on SADF involvement.[663] The MPLA clients were almost totally dependent on their Cuban allies to win victories for them at this intense stage of the conflict.[664]

As the Cuban presence expanded, Castro dispatched General Abelardo Colome Ibarra—widely known as "Furry"—to take command in Angola.[665] Furry was a good choice.[666] Due to their close relationship, he was quite comfortable with Castro's micromanaging ways.[667] Castro also relied on Jorge Risquet, who had a long relationship with the MPLA, as his diplomatic envoy.[668] In late November and early December, the Cuban sealift began arriving in Luanda, further increasing MPLA dependence on its Cuban patrons.[669] Interestingly, the Cuban airlift in November and December 1975 was done on a shoestring, without Soviet support—even after independence day.[670] Indeed,

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660 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 91; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 253, 261–62.

661 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 91; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 262–65.

662 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 68–73, 74–76, 86–90, 91–93, 93–97, 104; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 67–68, 71; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 234, 259–62, 266–67; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 144; Hodges, "Struggle," 181.

663 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 96.

664 George, 90, 106–7, 113.

665 George, 65, 98.

666 George, 98.

667 George, 98.

668 George, 98–99.

669 George, 99; Bender, "Angola," 3.

670 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 99–100.

on 9 December the White House, concerned about the Cuban buildup, asked the Soviet ambassador to cease the aerial reinforcement, citing it as a threat to détente.[671] Amazingly, the Soviets did force a brief pause in the flow of Cuban reinforcements—demonstrating the very real differences between the two external sponsors.[672] However, when the Clark Amendment passed in the U.S. Senate, limiting U.S. covert involvement in Angola, the Soviets realized that Ford's threat was nothing but talk.[673] They began supporting the Cubans with lift assets and a massive flow of materiel, which the Cubans operated on the battlefield—teaching apprentice FAPLA crews who fought alongside them.[674]

The Soviets were now fully committed to Castro's strategy in Angola, and the Cubans began planning the northern counteroffensive.[675] Demonstrating the Cuban ability to influence FAPLA military objectives, the offensive "had been timed to coincide with the opening of the First Party Congress."[676] Though the SADF columns were still advancing in the south, Furry was able to take personal command and blunt their advance, launching a counteroffensive (named Operation First Party Congress) to seize the initiative.[677] With Cuban/FAPLA forces on the march on both fronts, Castro's First Party Congress was a success.[678] His internationalist intervention was solidifying his domestic position.[679] In mid-January 1976, with the OAU recognizing the PRA and

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671 George, 99–100; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 142–43.

672 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 99–100; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 142–43.

673 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 100–101; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 142–43; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 68, 70; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 17; Guelke, "Southern Africa and the Super-Powers," 657.

674 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 99, 101; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 144; Somerville, "Angola," 296; Shubin, "Unsung Heroes," 259; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65, 73.

675 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 101; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 142–43; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 381.

676 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 101.

677 George, 102–6; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 68; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 142.

678 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 104–5.

679 George, 113–14; Nagel, and Whorton, "Ethnic Conflict," 18–19.

condemning South African involvement, the SADF began its withdrawal.[680] By early February, the South Africans were largely gone, keeping only a small rearguard force in Southern Angola to protect the Namibian border and the Calueque dam.[681]

Without SADF backing, the conventional threat from UNITA and FNLA had passed, and the Cubans and FAPLA troops easily cut through the defenses, crushing FNLA and forcing Savimbi to shift UNITA back to the guerrilla warfare for which the Chinese had trained him in the previous decade.[682] Castro had gambled and won; not only was Neto grateful—so were the Soviets.[683] Though Castro had pushed them outside their comfort zone, he was successful by 1976, and the Soviets showed their gratitude by paying for the operation, rescheduling Cuba's debt and increasing aid to the island.[684] Having won a great internationalist victory, and expanded his prestige, Castro wanted to begin scaling back his commitment.[685] However, he did not realize that he was stuck.[686] His decisive intervention had increased client dependence, giving him massive influence over the MPLA, but that same dependence meant that the MPLA would struggle and maybe even collapse without him.[687] After all, the FNLA enjoyed sanctuary in Zaire, UNITA was led by the war's most charismatic and capable commander, and the South Africans were diplomatically embarrassed, but still unbowed.[688] The presence of conventional troops in Carlota, which had been intended as a brief surge, would be extended for 15 more years.[689]

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680 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 106; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64.

681 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 106, 112.

682 George, 110–12; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 71–72; Jackson, "China's Third World Foreign Policy," 397–98.

683 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 113–14; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117, 118.

684 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 113–14; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117, 118.

685 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 113–15; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Nagel, and Whorton, "Ethnic Conflict," 18–19; Guimarães, "Origins," 307.

686 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 115; Bender, "Angola," 13, 16–17.

687 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 115, 116, 123–24; Bender, "Angola," 3, 13, 16–17.

688 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 114–15; Bender, "Angola," 16–17.

689 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 116; Hughes, My Enemy's Enemy, 65.

4.   1976-1979: Counter-Coup, COIN and Mission-Creep

Castro began the first, limited redeployment of Cuban troops in March 1976.[690] Soon afterward, Neto likewise took advantage of his newfound breathing space to deal with the MPLA's perennial problems of client organizational enforcement.[691] In October 1976, Neto removed Nito Alves from his position as minister of internal administration—dissolving the ministry and launching an investigation into the factionalism that Alves and his comrades from the First Military Region had been fostering.[692] Leveraging resentment against the urbane MPLA elite, Nito espoused a black nationalist, radically pro-Soviet agenda that, ironically, was also pushed by exiled white Portuguese communists like Cita Vales.[693] Vales and other PCP members fled Portugal after the MFA lost power to a more conservative, democratically-elected government in Lisbon.[694] She swayed Alves from Maoism to Leninism, and then married Van Dunem.[695] Neto gave his investigators five months to complete their inquiry into Nito Alves's factionalism.[696] Alves, Van Dunem, Monstro Imortal, and other First Region and *Podar Popular* veterans used those five months to prepare a coup against Neto.[697]

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690 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 115.

691 George, 128.

692 George, 127, 128; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 124; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 21; Bender, "Angola," 24–25; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 91, 94–95.

693 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 127; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89–92; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 127–29; Bender, "Angola," 23, 24–25, 26; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 177.

694 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 175–77; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128–29.

695 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 177; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128–30; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 89.

696 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128.

697 George, 128; Bender, "Angola," 25; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 95.

Figure 14.   Castro's Visit to Angola.[698]

While this fissure was deepening, Castro made his victorious 1977 visit to Luanda.[699] Neto confided in Castro regarding his COE problems, with which Castro sympathized and understood.[700] Castro's support for Neto against internal challenges makes for an interesting comparison with the Soviets, who did not like Neto.[701] In 1976, Vasily Kuznetsov—the deputy foreign minister—described Neto in the following manner to Arkady Shevchenko, who would later defect to the United States, "We only need him for a certain period. We know he's been sick. He's come here a couple of times for treatment. And psychologically he's not all that reliable. But he's completely under our control, and that's what counts now. As for what comes later, we'll handle it."[702] An African specialist in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs likewise hinted to Shevchenko that the Soviet security services had been involved with previous assassination plots against Neto.[703] Castro, on the other hand, had previously supported Neto during the Eastern

698 "24_de_marzo.Jpg (JPEG Image, 773 × 492 Pixels)," *Fidel Soldado de las Ideas*, accessed August 31, 2017, http://www.fidelcastro.cu/sites/default/files/imagenes/noticias/24_de_marzo.jpg.

699 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 124–25, 126–27.

700 George, 126–27.

701 George, 46; Guimarães, "Origins," 293, 308; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 120, 130; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 242–43; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 55; Legum, "The Soviet Union," 749; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 607; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 81–82.

702 Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

703 Shevchenko, 273.

Revolt.[704] Amazingly, Nitista plotters asked Castro for Cuban support during the planned coup.[705] The actions of the Cubans in response to this coup attempt would cement the Castro-Neto relationship, while the coup severely threatened the Soviet-MPLA bond.[706]

The MPLA Central Committee heard the findings of the inquiry on the night of May 20, and then denounced Van Dunem and Alves for their factionalism.[707] Alves made wild counter-accusations against the MPLA leadership and Neto, including reproving him for being anti-Soviet.[708] Neto did not immediately order the arrest or execution of Alves and Van Dunem following their denunciation.[709] Rather, he took them aside and tried to reason with them and bring them back into the fold.[710] This attempt at reasoning failed and six days later on 27 May the plotters launched their coup.[711] Monstro Imortal led the FAPLA's Eighth Brigade on an assault that first liberated a group of Nitista prisoners from the Luanda prison, then seized the radio station before heading to the Presidential Palace, where they were to converge with a demonstration of civilians rallied from the *musseques*, and detain Neto.[712] At the same time, Nitista "Death Commandos" were supposed to fan out through the city and execute senior MPLA leaders like Lucio Lara.[713] Things went according to plan through the seizure of the radio station, but Alves's supposed appeal in the *musseques* did not translate into a large demonstration.[714] More importantly, Rafael Moracen, now the

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704 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46.

705 George, 128.

706 George, 129–31; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130–31.

707 Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 97.

708 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 96–98, 103; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128.

709 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 98; Bender, "Angola," 25.

710 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 98; Bender, "Angola," 25.

711 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128–29; Bender, "Angola," 25; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 98–100.

712 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128–29; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 99–100.

713 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 99–100; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129.

714 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 100; Bender, "Angola," 25; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128–30.

Cuban commander in Luanda, had gotten wind of the coup and prevailed upon Neto to take shelter in the Ministry of Defense.[715] Thus, Neto was not present at the Presidential Palace when Monstro Imortal arrived with the Eighth Brigade.[716] Moracen also personally led the local Cuban garrison in putting down the coup.[717] After suppressing the Nitistas at the Presidential Palace, he seized the radio station and began broadcasting pro-Neto messages in *Portuñol*.[718] By November, almost all of the coup's leaders had been rounded up by Cuban and FAPLA troops.[719] Cita Vales sought assistance from the Soviet embassy for her escape, but was unsuccessful.[720] The Nitistas had managed to cause some damage though—murdering ten MPLA prisoners.[721] It was probably this bloody action that finally convinced Neto that the plotters should be executed.[722]

Decisive action by Moracen and the Cubans had saved Neto and significantly improved the MPLA's COE—never again would Neto be challenged by internal factions.[723] Interestingly, the Cubans may have been competing with the Soviets in suppressing the coup.[724] Neto and other key MPLA leaders certainly saw a Soviet hand in the Nitista coup.[725] Neto even dismissed the Soviet ambassador, and the Soviets tried to remove the Cubans from the posts that were key to the coup's suppression.[726]

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715 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129.

716 George, 129.

717 George, 129–30.

718 George, 129–30.

719 George, 130; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 101–2.

720 Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 102.

721 Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 101; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 130; Bender, "Angola," 25.

722 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 130; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 101.

723 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129–31; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 279, 281; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 73; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 100–01, 103; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 65; Bender, "Angola," 25; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Klinghoffer, The Angolan War, 131, 133; Somerville, "Angola," 299.

724 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 129–31; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 63–64; Bender, "Angola," 25–26; Somerville, "Angola," 299–300.

725 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 128; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130.

726 Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 128; Bender, "Angola," 25–26.

However, when the Soviets extended their encouragement to Neto, he reciprocated by expressing words of gratitude and friendship (something he had to do in order to draw the sting from Alves's anti-Soviet accusation).[727] There is significant disagreement among scholars about what the Soviets did or did not do concerning Nito Alves's coup, but it seems very likely that they did not inform Neto about their knowledge of the planned coup.[728] The Soviets had a history of dissatisfaction with Neto's leadership, and throughout his time as MPLA president he maintained openness to the west as well as the east.[729] Meanwhile, Alves was outspokenly pro-Soviet, had visited Moscow, and regularly met with the Soviets at their embassy in Luanda.[730] If the Nitistas were bold enough to seek support from Castro, Neto's closest ally, I find it hard to believe they would not have sought Soviet backing.[731] After all, the Kremlin had withdrawn its support to Neto during the previous challenge to his authority.[732] From the Soviet perspective, it was a logical move to wait and see what would happen.[733] There was no imminent threat from Savimbi or Roberto, and if Alves was successful, the Soviets would have gained a more pliant client, and maybe basing rights for their navy.[734] If unsuccessful, the MPLA would at least have been forced to deal with its internal

727 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131–32; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 103; Somerville, "Angola," 299–300.

728 Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 21; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 128; Bender, "Angola," 25–26; Shubin and Tokarev dismiss the claims of Soviet involvement as stemming from a misunderstanding between Neto and the ailing Brezhnev. Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 614; Fauvet is the most outspoken non-Russian voice of disagreement with the claims of Russian involvement. Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 92, 103; Somerville also expresses valid skepticism. Somerville, "Angola," 299–300.

729 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 131; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 63–64; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 229, 281; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 242–43.

730 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 127, 131; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 279, 281; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130; Somerville, "Angola," 299–300; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 92.

731 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128.

732 George, 46–47, 51; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64; Bender, "Angola," 23.

733 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

734 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 112–14, 131; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130; Bender, "Angola," 23; Marcum, The Angolan Revolution II, 279; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 2, 15; Somerville, "Angola," 297; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 21–22.

problems.[735] Besides, no matter how upset Neto got, he could not exactly turn away Soviet support.[736] The Soviets were providing all his materiel and underwriting the costs of his Cuban Varangian Guard.[737] Even though Neto saw a Soviet hand in the coup, he still transitioned the MPLA into an orthodox communist party and deepened ties with the Soviets in a process modeled on Cuban Institutionalization.[738]

During this period, regular Cuban troops were largely confined to garrison duty, manning bases in Angola's cities, and defending key infrastructure, as well as a defensive line in Southern Angola.[739] Cuban advisors trained the FAPLA, as well as guerrillas from Namibia's Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), and the African National Congress' militant wing—the *Umkhonto weSizewe* (MK).[740] The Cubans did occasionally see action during counterinsurgency (COIN) operations alongside FAPLA troops, and they also conducted local security patrols and convoy security operations.[741] The Cuban troops were joined by a massive influx of humanitarian internationalists.[742] These medical and technical professionals, as well as teachers, provided essential civil services to the Angolan people.[743] The internationalist service also acted as an outlet for Cuba's surplus of young, educated professionals, easing social strain at home.[744] Furthermore, the Angolan government paid for the humanitarian internationalist mission.[745] Though Castro wanted to end the Cuban intervention in Angola, his troops

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735 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 132; Fauvet, "Rise and Fall," 103.

736 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 122.

737 George, 114, 122–23; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117, 118; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65.

738 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 131–32; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 278–79.

739 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 118–20, 150–51, 190. Cabinda's oil infrastructure—operated by Gulf Oil—was protected by a sizable force of Cubans.

740 George, 122–23, 155.

741 George, 152–54.

742 George, 157; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 134; Bender, "Angola," 8.

743 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 157–61; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 134; Bender, "Angola," 8.

744 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 144.

745 George, 150; Christopher Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 244; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 75.

were stuck in their defensive garrisons by the threat of a major SADF invasion—a threat which was underscored as SADF incursions against SWAPO increased, starting in 1977 with Operation Reindeer, the SADF's militarily successful, though internationally condemned raid on SWAPO camps in Cassinga and Chetequera.[746]

External pressures did lead the Cubans to scale back their Angolan presence in 1977.[747] When Somali troops invaded Ethiopia's Ogaden region, the Cubans and Soviets launched a Carlota-like operation in support of the Mengistu regime.[748] Cuban troops would prove decisive in defeating the Somalis.[749] Jorge Risquet had to exercise some influence over MPLA military objectives during this period.[750] He persuaded Neto to postpone Shaba II—the second Angola-based Katangese incursion into Zaire—until after the Cubans had defeated the Somalis.[751] Though the Cubans were likely uninvolved with either Shaba I or II, they had received significant international condemnation for both incursions.[752] However, from Neto's perspective they paid off—enabling him to make a lasting deal with Mobutu to restrain the Katangese in return for Mobutu collaring the FLEC and FNLA.[753]

Subsequently with Mobutu no longer supporting the FLEC and FNLA, Neto—dying of cancer—tried to make peace with UNITA before passing away on 10 September 1979.[754] The attempt failed, and the Cubans were still stuck in Angola.[755] Cuban influence was set to decline further, as Eduardo Dos Santos, the consensus pick to replace

746 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 119–20, 133–35.

747 George, 132–33.

748 George, 132–33; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22.

749 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 133.

750 George, 133.

751 George, 133.

752 George, 126, 133, 136.

753 George, 136; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 71.

754 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 136–38.

755 George, 138.

Neto, was trained in the Soviet Union and had a Russian wife.[756] It would be under Dos Santos that Soviet advisors eventually superseded the Cubans and began calling the shots for FAPLA.[757]

5. 1979-1987: Eclipse by the Soviets and Interventions by the South Africans

Inside Angola, the threat from UNITA had only grown in the face of repeated FAPLA offensives throughout the late 1970s.[758] Additionally, the SADF was launching increasingly frequent operations against SWAPO inside Angola.[759] Operations Sceptic and Protea in 1980 and 1981 saw SADF troops fight directly against FAPLA while partnered with UNITA.[760] Amazingly, this blatant threat to the MPLA regime failed to draw the Cubans out of their defensive positions.[761] Fazed by the Mariel boatlift, Castro had again shifted his focus inward.[762] What did, however, concern him was the new Reagan regime's diplomatic outreach toward the MPLA and South Africa.[763] Chester Crocker, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was seeking to link and resolve the conflicts in Angola and Namibia in order to achieve a peace settlement in which the Cubans and South Africans would be removed from both respective countries.[764] Castro, sensitive to international and domestic perceptions, was concerned that the MPLA would negotiate his withdrawal in a way that would look ignominious for

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756 George, 138, 174; Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy," 38; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 124, 134; Some in the MPLA even believed the Soviets killed Neto.; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 128; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64.

757 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 120, 183, 193; Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy," 38; Shubin, "Unsung Heroes," 260.

758 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 137; Hughes, My Enemy's Enemy, 74; Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy," 36.

759 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 137–41; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 74.

760 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 139–41; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 74.

761 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 141.

762 George, 141.

763 George, 170–76; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 70–71.

764 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 171–72; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 70–71.

the Cubans.[765] Excluded from the peace talks due to U.S. hostility, Castro prevailed upon Dos Santos to release bellicose joint statements about South Africa's duty to unilaterally withdraw from Namibia in accordance with United Nations Resolution 435, and affirming that the Cubans would need to be consulted prior to any decision to remove their troops.[766]

Meanwhile, the global situation was changing; the elections of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan had ushered in more assertive Western leaders, along with a new era of confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.[767] The Reagan Administration lobbied successfully to repeal the Clark Amendment and began covert support to Savimbi (which would eventually include Stingers and other high-end materiel).[768] As the United States was growing more assertive, the Soviets took the opposite approach.[769] Mikhail Gorbachev's 1985 rise to power completely changed the Soviet Union's internal dynamics, as well as the tone of its relationship with Cuba and the wider world.[770] Gorbachev was unwilling to underwrite Cuban adventures forever, and he viewed Angola as a waste of money (though the Soviet military would continue to drive an aggressive policy there).[771] Domestically, Castro was horrified by the idea that anything like *glasnost* might take root in Cuba.[772]

The writing was on the wall. The USSR would not support Castro's intervention in Angola forever.[773] Not only that, but in May 1987 General Del Pino, the deputy chief

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765 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 174–76.

766 George, 173, 177.

767 George, 139.

768 George, 138, 174, 191, 197; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 70; Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy," 39; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 16.

769 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 196.

770 George, 196; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 4, 15–17.

771 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 191, 192, 196, 201, 258–60; Michael McFaul, "The Demise of the World Revolutionary Process: Soviet-Angolan Relations Under Gorbachev," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1990): 170–75; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 4–6, 9.

772 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 196.

773 George, 196.

of Cuba's air force, defected to the United States and claimed that Angola was "Cuba's Vietnam."[774] He exposed ethical and professional problems, as well as low morale and a lack of confidence within the Cuban officer corps.[775] Castro needed to find peace with honor, and he needed to find it quickly.[776] Perhaps this is why he went along with massive Soviet-planned conventional offensives that his experienced Africa hands knew would not work.[777] Conventionally-minded Soviet advisors had taken responsibility for FAPLA's upper-level planning from 1984–1985.[778] Every summer, starting with Operation Congress II in 1985, FAPLA launched a series of massive assaults against UNITA in remote Southeastern Angola.[779] UNITA, with SADF support, succeeded in blunting these offensives, and in July 1987, Castro proposed joining the negotiations while his forces were assisting the Soviets in preparing FAPLA for their summer offensive: Operation Saluting October.[780]

6.   1987-1988: The Second Surge

Operation Saluting October quickly turned into a fiasco.[781] As SADF and UNITA troops mauled FAPLA in a series of engagements along the Lomba River, the Soviets— ever risk-averse in Angola—evacuated their advisors from the front, abandoning FAPLA units fighting for their lives.[782] The Cubans again stepped up to assist FAPLA and the MPLA.[783] With his forces withdrawing under heavy pressure from the SADF, Dos

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774 As quoted in George, 201.

775 George, 201.

776 George, 201–202.

777 George, 200, 202.

778 George, 183, 191–93, 276–77; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 15.

779 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 164, 191, 192, 276–77; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 81–82.

780 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 194–95, 197–99, 200, 201–2; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 14; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 4; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 82.

781 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 200–207; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 20.

782 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 206–7; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Nolutshungu, "Soviet Involvement," 141.

783 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 208–9.

Santos, like Neto in 1975, requested additional forces from Castro to stave off military disaster.[784]

Castro recognized an opportunity not only to prevent defeat, but also to impose his will on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.[785] Though he would not be formally admitted to the negotiations until January 1988, Castro responded positively to Dos Santos's November request, sending his elite 50th Division along with other troops to reinforce the Cuban forces already in-country.[786] As in 1975, the Soviets were not on board with this expanded strategy, and did not agree with Castro's proposal for new offensives—they were still smarting from the disaster of Operation Saluting October.[787] Castro was on his own in pursuing a strategy of negotiating while fighting.[788] He planned a two-tracked military strategy that would give him a high-profile victory for prestige, while forcing concessions from the South Africans with an offensive along the Namibian border.[789]

The "victory" would come just across the Cuito River from the FAPLA base at Cuito Cuanavale.[790] Though the SADF's objectives were limited—following their victories on the Lomba, they were ordered "to destroy all FAPLA forces east of the Cuito" to remove threats to UNITA—the MPLA was worried that the SADF would seize Cuito Cuanavale and threaten Menongue.[791] Castro recognized that holding Cuito Cuanavale would be a valuable propaganda victory if nothing else—so he ordered his

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784 George, 210.

785 George, 210–11, 246–55; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60.

786 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 210–11, 220–21; McFaul, "Demise," 183; Hughes, My *Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 23.

787 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 210.

788 George, 210–11, 221, 230; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60.

789 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 211–12, 221, 230; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60.

790 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 234–235.

791 George, 207, 209, 211, 213.

troops to hold the town as well as a bridgehead on the east bank of the river.[792] The SADF, limited by Pretoria to operations east of the river, focused all their effort on crushing this small bridgehead, which was well-entrenched and protected with significant minefields.[793] Not surprisingly, the SADF failed in the biggest African battle since El Alamein, beginning their withdrawal in March 1988.[794] Though the battle was really a stalemate (SADF had never intended to capture the town), Castro portrayed the Cuban defense of Cuito Cuanavale as a massive victory over the forces of apartheid.[795]

Figure 15.   Cubans Pose Next to an Abandoned SADF Tank.[796]

With Cuito Cuanavale providing the propaganda victory Castro needed for peace with honor, his forces began applying pressure on the SADF in Southwest Angola—the other aspect of his strategy.[797] Cunene, the province in Southwestern Angola in which the South Africans had their Calueque hydroelectric station, had seen limited fighting, and

792 George, 211, 213, 223, 234–35.

793 George, 207, 225–30, 231–34.

794 George, 213, 234; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 82–83.

795 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 213, 235.

796 "Did Cuban Soldiers Ever Meet Portuguese or...(2017) - Quora," *Quora*, accessed October 15, 2017, https://www.quora.com/Did-Cuban-soldiers-ever-meet-Portuguese-or-South-African-soldiers-in-colonial-wars-in-Africa.

797 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 211–12, 216, 235, 236; McFaul, "Demise," 187; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 82–83.

the South Africans there felt comfortable.[798] Risquet had already secured Angolan approval to push as far as the border, and the Cubans began building airfields just north of Cunene and moving advanced surface to air missile and radar systems into the area.[799] Meanwhile, starting after Cuito Cuanavale, on 11 March, they infiltrated significant troops into the province.[800] These moves did not just threaten Cunene province, they also threatened Namibia.[801] On 27 June, with the second round of Cuban-attended negotiations stalled, the Cubans engaged in heavy fighting with the SADF in Cunene.[802] They followed this up with a deadly air raid on Calueque, which caused the SADF to pull back, limiting its activity, and defending the Namibian border.[803] At the negotiating table, things proceeded quickly, especially after the Cubans replaced the combative Jorge Risquet as lead negotiator.[804] Indeed, the Cubans demonstrated the high level of client compatibility that their latest intervention had bought them by convincing their emboldened Angolan allies to go along with the negotiations.[805] On 22 December 1988, the Cubans, Angolans and South Africans signed the New York Accords.[806] The South Africans agreed to implement Resolution 435, withdrawing from Namibia and allowing fair elections.[807] In return, the Angolans agreed to restrain SWAPO incursions, and the Cubans agreed to gradually withdraw over a 27-month timeline, starting with their retrograde from positions in Southern Angola.[808]

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798 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 5, 211–12, 237, 241.

799 George, 215, 236–37; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 81–84.

800 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 236–37; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84.

801 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 237, 246; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 82–84.

802 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 243–46; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84.

803 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 245–46; Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" 245–46.

804 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 246–47; McFaul, "Demise," 187; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 617.

805 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 247.

806 George, 253–55; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 84; Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" 246; McFaul, "Demise," 183–84.

807 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 255; Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" 246.

808 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 249, 255; Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" 246.

7.   1989–1991: Withdrawal

The New York Agreements held.[809] Despite an unauthorized SWAPO foray into Namibia in April 1989, the signatories restrained from further fighting in Southern Angola.[810] And, despite being attacked sporadically by UNITA, the Cubans were able to withdraw ahead of schedule.[811] Though Savimbi remained a dangerous enemy of the Dos Santos regime, the Cubans were able to end their sponsor-affiliate relationship with the MPLA on honorable terms.[812] Cuban fighting and negotiating had eliminated the most potent foreign threat to the MPLA.[813] The Cuba-MPLA relationship had proved very durable, lasting over 25 years, and ending not with desertion by the client or abandonment by the sponsor, but with a mutually agreed upon withdrawal.[814] This was certainly a positive example of ECM—though it was very expensive.

On 25 May 1991, the last Cuban internationalists left Angola.[815] A month earlier, Savimbi had signed the Bicesse Accords, raising the hope for peace between the MPLA and UNITA.[816] Though those accords would soon break down, sending UNITA back into the field, the breakdown would not draw Cuba back into Angola.[817] The era of internationalism had ended with the Cold War.[818] Cuba was more isolated than it ever had been before.[819] Cuba did maintain a covert presence in Luanda, manning Dos Santos's presidential guard to prevent a coup.[820] Otherwise, the service and sacrifice of

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809 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 256–58, 269; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 84; Pycroft, "Angola--'The Forgotten Tragedy,'" 246.

810 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 84; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 257–58.

811 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 258, 269.

812 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–85; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 255, 272–73.

813 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 236–55.

814 George, 255.

815 George, 269.

816 George, 269; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 84.

817 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 272–73; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 84.

818 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 267–68, 270–71, 282–85.

819 George, 270–71.

820 George, 270.

the Cuban internationalists was largely forgotten.[821] Cuba's African adventures could still, however, be drawn on to boost Castro's international prestige.[822] Mandela and the leaders of the new South Africa considered the Cuban victory over the SADF to be one of the key factors leading to the end of apartheid.[823] Nevertheless, the Angolans would fight their long counterinsurgency against Savimbi and UNITA without Cuban help.[824]

D. ASSESSMENT

1. Compatibility and Durability

Cuba and the MPLA began their relationship with a very high degree of ideological compatibility.[825] Both espoused an independent socialist ideology, and both Castro and Neto favored inclusive, non-racial policies for their diverse, mixed populations.[826] Though the military objectives of the MPLA and its Cuban advisors saw periods of higher and lower compatibility throughout the course of the long relationship, when the situation in Angola was at its most dangerous points Castro always proved willing to increase his commitment—pulling MPLA and Soviet plans and objectives along with him at times.[827] As seen in the previous section, the Cubans and their MPLA partners had a very durable relationship, lasting over 25 years without desertion or abandonment.[828]

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821 George, 267–68, 282–85.

822 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 85; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*.

823 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83, 85; Jihan Al Tahri, *Cuba, an African Odyssey*.

824 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 272–73.

825 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109, 115, 120, 122.

826 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8; COHA, "Revolutionary Racism in Cuba," *Council on Hemispheric Affairs*, June 21, 2011, http://www.coha.org/revolutionary-racism-in-cuba/; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 301; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172, 279; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 122; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 21–22; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 54; Hodges, "Struggle," 175–76; Webber, "Soviet Policy," 21; Somerville, "Angola," 294.

827 Guimarães, "Origins," 323–24. George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 210–11, 274–76.

828 George, *The Cuban Intervention,* 274–75.

2.   Sponsor Competition

A critical element of Cuba's ECM in this case was its ability to set the course decisively among external sponsors.[829] In the early days, Neto's local sponsors like Congo-Brazzaville and Zambia had an outsize influence on the MPLA's military and political decision-making.[830] Indeed, even the Soviets willingly followed the OAU's lead with respect to Angola.[831] This was a natural result of the sanctuary that contiguous states provided to the MPLA. However, after 1974, as Angola became a more permissive environment and Cuba emerged from the cocoon of Institutionalization, things began to change.[832] Cuba's decision in 1975 to intervene decisively without Soviet blessing was a gamble that achieved positive foreign policy results for the USSR.[833] The cooperative pattern of support that the Cubans and Soviets developed after Operation Carlota's start was so successful that they exported it to Ethiopia during the 1977–1978 Ogaden Crisis—with the Cubans supplying manpower and expertise, and the Soviets supplying materiel.[834] Castro seemed to have a better sense, not only of what was best for the situation on the ground, but even (perhaps inadvertently) what was best for the Soviets.[835] The 1975 pattern would be repeated in 1987.[836] The Soviets did not support Castro's plans for an expanded effort in Southern Angola, but he did it anyway, and achieved an outcome that benefited the entire sponsor coalition.[837] In another example,

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829 George, 210–11, 276; Guimarães, "Origins," 323–26.

830 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 22, 35; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 60, 77–78, 82–83, 100–101.

831 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 11–12, 47; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 229; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 83; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

832 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 252–53; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 42–44, 52–55.

833 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 78–79, 101, 113–14, 276; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 381; Guimarães, "Origins," 323–26; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202, 228–29.

834 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 122–23, 132–33; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 73; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 371; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Stevens, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 144; Guimarães, "Origins," 323, 326; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117, 118, 134.

835 Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 381; Guimarães, "Origins," 325–26; George, *The Cuban Intervention,* 101, 209–11.

836 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 211; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60.

837 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 210–11, 255, 277; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29.

the decisive Cuban support to Neto during the Alves coup ultimately resulted in a more centralized MPLA with closer ties to the Soviets—despite the blind eye that the Soviets may have turned toward the Nitistas.[838]

The MPLA's history of high sponsor competition and low client organizational enforcement seems to fly in the face of my quantitative findings from Hypothesis 2a. Even if we assume no nefarious sponsor involvement with any of the coup plotters or factions that emerged during the MPLA's history, the fact that all the factional leaders publicly aligned themselves with one of many external sponsors indicates that internal factions jockeying for influence may be encouraged by the ability to buttress their positions through appeals to external sponsors. Viriato da Cruz was pro-Chinese; Chipenda was pro-Soviet and was backed by Zambia; and Alves was pro-Soviet.[839] However, the MPLA did coalesce into a much stronger organization over time.

Finally, of all the external advisors and personnel operating in Angola, MPLA personnel were partial to the Cubans.[840] There were a variety of reasons for this, which will be explored further in the section on sponsor oversight. However, Cuban rapport with their partners joined Castro's clear and consistent backing of Neto as a reason for Cuban success in the area of sponsor competition.[841]

3. Client Competition

In a conflict environment characterized by tense client competition, the Cubans single-mindedly supported one organization, Neto's MPLA.[842] This is the opposite

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838 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129–32; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131.

839 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 127–28, 131; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 45, 81–83, 85, 111; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 130; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 237; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 87, 90–92, 204; Barnett, and Harvey, *The Revolution in Angola*, 259.

840 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 122–23, 158–59, 161; Bender, "Angola," 8–11; Klinghoffer, T*he Angolan War*, 114, 116–17.

841 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 122–23, 128–30, 158–59, 161; Bender, "Angola," 26; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114, 116–17; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64.

842 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8, 46; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 120, 134; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63.

approach to that pursued by the IRGC in Iraq, but it is the approach that I expected to be more likely for a non-contiguous sponsor.[843] Unlike the IRGC in Iraq, Castro's objectives in Angola were based more on ideology than national security interests (though to be fair, there was a significant mix in both cases). After the fall of Saddam, Iran's primary goals were to build influence in the new Iraq, while preventing the growth of anything that could threaten Iran in the same way Saddam had.[844] These goals necessitated a strategy of continuous, open-ended involvement with a variety of affiliates across the Iraqi political spectrum.[845] Unlike Iran, Castro sought to win a quick, anti-imperialist victory followed by a withdrawal.[846] The Cuban exit plan required a single, strong, local partner that could stand on its own after withdrawal.[847] This, along with the MPLA's ideological compatibility, is why the Cubans never supported any of the MPLA's competitors.[848]

Within this case study, the Cuban approach can be contrasted with the approaches of contiguous sponsor states like Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa/Zaire and Zambia. These states all supported the MPLA at certain times, but they also developed relations (in Zaire's case much stronger relations) with the MPLA's competing national liberation movements.[849] This makes sense. These countries sought to further their interests and hedge their bets by supporting the competitors.

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[843] Though the results were not robust to the inclusion of country-level fixed effects, Models 4 and 5 in Table 2 provide limited quantitative support for the claim that non-contiguous sponsors are more likely to support a single, cohesive affiliate.

[844] Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–7; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 182.

[845] Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–7; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56.

[846] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 274–75; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202.

[847] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 114–15; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64.

[848] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 8; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Klinghoffer, The Angolan War, 109, 115, 120.

[849] George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 10–11, 35, 40, 61; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 62, 63, 71, 72; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution I*, 316–17; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 73–76, 124–25, 156–57, 173–74, 227; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 64, 77–78.

4. Client Organizational Enforcement

The Cubans consistently backed Neto and the central MPLA against factional opposition.[850] The Cubans pursued this approach—one which was also unlike that pursued by the IRGC in Iraq—for the same reasons they supported the MPLA instead of its competitors. The Cubans needed a strong, centralized partner to hold onto the gains they were making after withdrawal.[851] Castro already had a relationship with Neto, whose ideology was highly compatible with his, so the Cubans had no reason to reach out to Neto's internal rivals.[852] A perfect contrasting example is Kenneth Kaunda's initial support to Chipenda's faction during the Eastern Revolt.[853]

The Soviet Union's discontent with Neto and possible support to his internal opponents seems to suggest that the differing approaches to client organizational enforcement pursued by Angola's neighbors and the Cubans may not have been motivated by contiguity or lack thereof.[854] Perhaps the Soviets simply doubted Neto's leadership skills, or saw the potential to empower other leaders who were rhetorically closer to the USSR.[855] These factors undoubtedly played a role in the Soviet approach to MPLA factionalism, but Henning Tamm's research suggests a different theoretical explanation. Tamm shows that states pursuing influence-building strategies are more likely to disrupt COE by supporting internal challenges to their clients' leadership than those seeking outright regime change.[856] The Soviets do seem to have been pursuing an influence-building strategy at times in Africa. They consistently tied their support to the

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850 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 128, 129–31; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63, 73; Guimarães, "Origins," 308; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 120, 131; Bender, "Angola," 26.

851 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 114–15; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64.

852 Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 172; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 128, 174; Guimarães, "Origins," 293; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109, 115.

853 Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 82–83, 108–10.

854 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 131; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 121–31; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 81–82; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

855 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 81–82; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 273.

856 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 601–2.

MPLA to OAU policy.[857] Thus, when the OAU got discouraged with MPLA factionalism, so did the Kremlin.[858] Also, the Soviets did support Neto's post-coup centralization and institutionalization, and backed Dos Santos, who seized special war powers that increased his personal control of the MPLA.[859] While the Soviet record with respect to supporting MPLA COE was not as sterling as Cuba's, it was at worst mixed.

5. Sponsor Oversight

Because the traditional method of Cuban support to national liberation movements was provision of training and deployment of advisors, the Cubans quickly established a degree of sponsor oversight of MPLA activities.[860] This SO increased dramatically with the massive influx of Cubans in 1975.[861] Cuban advisors and humanitarian internationalists were esteemed more highly by Angolans than their Eastern European counterparts.[862] The Cubans were cheaper for the Angolan government; the advisors had significant experience in African wars; and—though regular Cuban troops led a cloistered existence on bases—the advisors and internationalists often shared the Angolans' living conditions.[863] This stood in contrast with the Eastern Europeans, especially the prima donna Soviets, who insisted on separate expatriate living areas with air conditioning, and whose racist attitudes led the Angolans to view them almost as a new colonialist class.[864] Initially, the Cuban government selected black soldiers for

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857 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 11–12, 46, 47, 53.

858 George, 46, 47; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 229; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 83.

859 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 132, 138, 178; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 134.

860 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28–29; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 109–10.

861 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 64–65, 68; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–75.

862 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 122–23, 158–59, 161; Bender, "Angola," 8–9; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114, 116–17.

863 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 123, 158–59, 161; Bender, "Angola," 8–9; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 116–17.

864 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 159, 161; Bender, "Angola," 10–11; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 116–17.

service in Africa, and by speaking *Portuñol*—a bastardized mix of Portuguese and Spanish—most Cubans managed to converse at a rudimentary level.[865]

While the Angolans looked up to the Cubans, the Cubans often looked down on FAPLA.[866] FAPLA units full of press-ganged conscripts often broke and ran, leaving the Cubans to face the heaviest fighting, and many FAPLA troops deserted to UNITA.[867] The Cubans much preferred to work with the more highly motivated guerrillas of SWAPO and MK.[868]

Still, Cuban persistence and activity alongside their partner forces helped Cuba build influence over MPLA objectives and enabled preferred outcomes. For example, the defense of Cabinda in 1975 was Castro's plan—not Neto's, and it was General Espinosa's energetic command and the presence of Cuban advisors there that allowed the mixed FAPLA/Cuban force to hold the exclave.[869] Likewise, in 1977 Moracen's persistence in convincing Neto to take shelter in the Ministry of Defense kept the president safe during the coup, and the swift Cuban response in crushing the Nitistas kept Castro's preferred leader in charge of the MPLA.[870] Finally, when Soviet advisors abandoned FAPLA during the heavy fighting on the Lomba River in 1987, the Cubans stepped in, saving the situation, and allowing Castro to impose a new set of military objectives: defend Cuito Cuanavale, and squeeze the SADF in Cunene.[871]

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865 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 26, 159; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 114.

866 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 122–23, 155.

867 George, 155; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 20, 28, 30.

868 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 155.

869 George, 66, 82–86; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 241.

870 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129–30; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 73; Bender, "Angola," 25–26; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 64.

871 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 206–7, 208–9, 210–11, 215, 221, 230; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 60.

6. Client Dependence

The three preceding examples also highlight the importance of client dependence—which may have been even more important than SO in Cuban ECM, though they were certainly complimentary. It was not just Cuban advice and oversight that won the day in Cabinda, it was also the presence of 232 Cuban soldiers on the front lines, along with the first push of Cuban materiel.[872] Likewise, Moracen's foresight, advice, and quick reactions may have saved Neto in 1977, but Cuban firepower certainly helped in suppressing the coup.[873] The post-Lomba fighting in 1987 and 1988 saw massive FAPLA dependence on the Cubans—especially for air support and air defense.[874]

The biggest arguments for the importance of client dependence to Cuban effective client management are, of course, the massive surges of conventional Cuban combat power in 1975 and 1988.[875] These interventions by Cuban regulars twice saved the MPLA, and after the interventions, compatibility of objectives increased—with the Cubans setting the military strategy for both the MPLA and the Soviets in Angola.[876]

The prominent role played by client dependence had consequences. Castro found himself committed to an open-ended deployment that caused resentment among his officer corps and cost the lives of between 2,016 and 10,000 Cubans.[877] External sponsors leveraging CD to build and maintain influence should realize the very real

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872 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 82–86.

873 George, 129–30; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Bender, "Angola," 25–26; Somerville, "Angola," 299; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131, 133.

874 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 208–9, 211, 215–16, 225–26, 236–37, 243–45; Shubin and Sidorov, *Oral History*, 15–16, 32; Ian Liebenberg, "The Oral History of Forgotten Wars: The Memoirs of Veterans of the War in Angola," *Scientia Militaria South African Journal of Military Studies* 36, no. 1 (May 2008): 117.

875 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 80–81, 210–12; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 65, 68, 73, 83–84; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–75; Hodges, "Struggle," 181; Guimarães, "Origins," 292, 319–20; Bender, "Angola," 3, 12.

876 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 101, 210–11, 276–77; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 200–203, 228–29; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117, 120; Bender, "Angola," 3, 12.

877 3,800 KIA and 10,000 WIA and MIA are likely the most accurate figures. George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 201, 268; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 202.

potential for this type of over-commitment. Indeed, too much client dependence can inhibit the development of affiliate forces' capability and capacity. American officers of my generation (and the Vietnam generation as well) can sympathize with Cuban frustrations over low-quality FAPLA partner forces.[878]

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878 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 155.

VII. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

Taken together, the two case studies suggest that the factors of effective client management (ECM) are important for both contiguous and non-contiguous external sponsors. These qualitative findings reinforce the quantitative chapter. However, there are important differences as well. In this chapter, I will discuss how each factor affects the variance of ECM. I will start with sponsor competition (SC), sponsor oversight (SO) and client dependence (CD), as these elements of ECM exhibit significant continuities for both contiguous and non-contiguous sponsors. I will then examine client organizational enforcement (COE) and client competition (CC), because contiguous and non-contiguous sponsors often take divergent approaches in manipulating these factors. For each factor, I will draw general implications from the quantitative chapter, and use the case studies for specific, illustrative instantiations of each variable.

A.   SPONSOR COMPETITION

The quantitative chapter demonstrates limited support for the significance of sponsor competition by showing that conflict environments characterized by higher levels of SC also see an increased incidence of rebel defiance and desertion. Thus, external sponsors operating in complex conflict environments with many competitors should mitigate the increased threat of desertion and defiance by manipulating the other factors of ECM, and also by consolidating the multiplicity of sponsors.[879] Iran in Iraq, and Cuba in Angola demonstrate two different ways to do this. Iran was dealing with an openly hostile competitor—the United States of America. The Iranians were able to influence American policy in ways that favored Iranian goals in Iraq.[880] In Angola, the Cubans were both competing and cooperating with the Soviet Union in supporting the MPLA.[881] While Iran used subtle methods to ensure its primacy in the sponsor competition, Cuba

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879 Popovic also hints at the potentially beneficial effects of sponsor synchronization in an environment with multiple sponsors. Popovic, "Fragile Proxies," 937.

880 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq Politics and 'Other Means.'"

881 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 183, 191–92; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 64–65.

was bold—relying on decisive action and overt activity to gain a dominant sponsor position.[882]

The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was initially operating without sponsor competition during the Iran-Iraq War.[883] However, after the Gulf War, the United States entered the scene as a competing sponsor for the allegiance of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).[884] Having failed to defeat Saddam conventionally during the Iran-Iraq War, or unconventionally during the 1991 uprising, Iran did not stop its longest-standing Iraqi affiliate from reaching out to the Americans.[885] Indeed, by green-lighting SCIRI's outreach, Ayatollah Khamenei inserted a loyal client into a position of influence with the powerful Americans.[886] After Operation Iraqi Freedom the IRGC continued encouraging SCIRI's cooperation with the United States, and—importantly—expanded the Iranian spectrum of clients to include Iraqi politicians, underground elements of the Badr Organization, *Jaish-al-Mahdi* (JAM), and splinter factions of JAM like *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* (AAH).[887] With the United States ignoring an Iranian diplomatic offer of formal cooperation, the Quds Force had to impose its will on its main competitor through subtler means.[888] By using its more violent affiliates like JAM and the special groups to create problems for Coalition Forces (CF) and the Iraqi Government to deal with, the IRGCQF allowed its other affiliates, Badr and SCIRI, to boost their credibility and influence with coalition authorities, thus boosting Iranian influence.[889]

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882 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 8–10; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 65, 210–11; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29.

883 Alaaldin, "Iran's Weak Grip"; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 81.

884 "Shiite Politics," 7–10.

885 "Shiite Politics," 7.

886 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 26.

887 Felter, and Fishman, 6, 26–27; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 5–6; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 181, 183.

888 William R. Polk, *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, from Persia to the Islamic Republic, from Cyrus to Ahmadinejad* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 198, 203; Guy Dinmore, "US Stalls on Iranian Offer of Reform Deal," *Information Clearing House*, March 16, 2004, http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article5864.htm.

889 Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 173–74; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

In Angola, the Cubans faced a completely different type of competition. Their ally and benefactor favored the same outcome that they did—a decisive MPLA victory—but sought to achieve it in different ways. The USSR was generally more risk-averse, and also less supportive of the MPLA leader, Agostinho Neto.[890] Castro, on the other hand, was characteristically bold and gambling.[891] In 1975, with the MPLA threatened on all sides, and the USSR hesitant to upset relations with the United States or to intervene overtly prior to Angolan independence, Castro made a unilateral decision to send a conventional expeditionary force to Angola.[892] The Soviets soon came around, supporting the Cubans with a massive influx of funding and materiel.[893] In 1977, Cuban forces in Luanda intervened decisively to crush a coup attempt against Neto that was, at a minimum, led by a pro-Soviet MPLA faction.[894] Finally, in 1987 and early 1988, with the USSR frustrated by the repeated failures of Soviet-sponsored FAPLA offensives, Castro again went against Soviet wishes in launching a conventional intervention in Angola.[895] Along with pushing the South Africans back to the Namibian border and setting the conditions for an honorable Cuban withdrawal, Castro's bold move put the Cubans back into the driver's seat in setting policy for the MPLA's coalition of sponsors.[896]

Though Iran and Cuba took very different approaches, both were successful in influencing the policies of their competing sponsors.[897] The case studies suggest that

890 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 53, 65; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 228–29; Nolutshungu, "Soviet Involvement," 141–42; Guimarães, "Origins," 308, 323–26; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 229; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 131.

891 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 78–79, 113; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 374–75.

892 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 77–80; Shevchenko, *Breaking with Moscow*, 272; Shubin and Tokarev, "War in Angola," 613.

893 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 80; Guimarães, "Origins," 323–27; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 229.

894 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 129–31; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 128–31; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 21–22; Nesbitt, "U.S. Foreign Policy," 63–64; Bender, "Eagle and Bear," 128; Bender, "Angola," 25–26.

895 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 205–11.

896 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 209–13, 243–46.

897 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 26–27; Guimarães, "Origins," 323–27.

sponsor competition is an important variable in vastly different circumstances. Looking beyond the two case studies, contiguous sponsors cooperating with powerful non-contiguous sponsors can leverage their strategic position to take a lead role in the sponsor coalition. For example, Pakistan's ability to establish its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as the focal point for all American and Saudi support to the Mujahedeen famously allowed the ISI to funnel money and materiel to its preferred affiliates in the 1980s.[898]

B.   SPONSOR OVERSIGHT

Sponsor oversight is another factor that is important for all external sponsors to increase. The quantitative chapter shows that *Advisors* tend to dampen the average combined incidence of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* in a given conflict environment, though the confidence level for this effect is only 90%. However, as with sponsor competition, the way in which external sponsors achieve sponsor oversight is dependent on the specific conditions of the conflict environment.

In Iraq, the IRGC incorporated the Badr Corps into its fighting formations during the Iran-Iraq War.[899] The presence of IRGC officers fighting alongside Badr Corps personnel enabled the IRGC to build deep ties with its affiliates.[900] These tight relationships proved durable in post-OIF Iraq—when Badr personnel were no longer dependent on Iran for sanctuary from Saddam.[901] Though post-Saddam Iraq was more hospitable to Iranians (especially after 2011), the Quds Force had a relatively small presence in Iraq prior to the conflict with the Islamic State.[902] A low-profile approach, relying on trusted, long-time affiliate personnel has been effective for Iran—for proof,

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[898] Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 113, 118, 126–27, 131, 132–33, 134–35, 136–37.

[899] "Shiite Politics," 4; Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 57.

[900] "Shiite Politics," 21.

[901] "Shiite Politics," 19–21.

[902] Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 223–25; Alaaldin, "Iran's Weak Grip"; Siegel, "The Myth of Iran's Military Mastermind"; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–8, 24.

one need only examine the continued pro-Iranian stance of prominent, long-time Iraqi partners like Hadi al-Ameri and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.[903]

Facing a different set of circumstances, the Cuban approach to SO in Angola was, likewise, different. The massive presence of Cuban advisors, regular troops and humanitarian internationalists gave the Cubans a first-hand look at MPLA activities.[904] This enabled the Cubans to detect and manage threats to their ECM—like preventing Alves's coup, and postponing the initiation of Shaba II.[905]

Iran's approach to sponsor oversight was far more cost-effective than that of Cuba, as the IRGC relied on long-standing clandestine relationships with key personnel. However, the contiguous, porous border between Iraq and Iran, and the IRGC's long history of interaction with Saddam's opponents were critical enabling factors unavailable to the Cubans in Angola. Also, the low-visibility nature of Iranian involvement may have been more necessity than choice. After all, the Quds Force (as well as the regular Iranian military) currently has a much more overt presence in Iraq than it did during the U.S. occupation.[906] Separated from Angola by the Atlantic Ocean, and without historic ties to the country, Cuba had neither the ability nor the interest to develop and maintain influence with a diverse spectrum of local power brokers.[907] From 1976 on, Castro sought to withdraw and disengage from Angola.[908] His objective there was not to secure

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903 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–8, 24; Filkins, "The Shadow Commander"; George, "Breaking Badr"; Smyth, "No 'Good' Militia."

904 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 28–29, 64–65, 77–78, 157–62; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–74; Bender, "Angola," 8–9.

905 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128–31, 133.

906 Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Iran's Elite Guards Fighting in Iraq to Push Back Islamic State," *Reuters*, August 3, 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-security-iran-insight/irans-elite-guards-fighting-in-iraq-to-push-back-islamic-state-idUSKBN0G30GE20140803; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 17, 49; Tim Arango, "Iran Dominates in Iraq After U.S. 'Handed the Country Over,'" *The New York Times*, July 15, 2017, sec. Middle East, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/15/world/middleeast/iran-iraq-iranian-power.html; Jonathan Marcus, "'Iran Aiding Iraq' with Attack Jets," *BBC News*, July 2, 2014, sec. Middle East, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28125687; Jassem Al Salami, "Iran Sends Tanks to Iraq to Fight ISIS | *Real Clear Defense*," accessed October 5, 2017, http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2014/08/25/iran_sends_tanks_to_iraq_to_fight_isis_107389.html.

907 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 144–46.

908 George, 116–17.

long-term influence, or, like Iran, to prevent the rise of any future threat.[909] The deep Iranian involvement with key players across the spectrum of Iraqi politics, which has characterized Iranian SO, is necessitated by Iran's long-term objectives in a country it cannot afford to ignore.[910]

C. CLIENT DEPENDENCE

Client dependence is a difficult variable to measure quantitatively. However, the case studies (especially the Cuba/MPLA study) speak to the importance of CD. The relevant literature on proxy warfare also supports the inclusion of client dependence as a key element of ECM.

The element of the Iran/Badr case study that most clearly affirms the importance of client dependence is the absolute SCIRI/Badr dependence on Iran for sanctuary during the Saddam years.[911] Even when Iranian objectives sharply diverged from those of SCIRI/Badr after the end of the Iran-Iraq War, there was no incidence of desertion or defiance.[912] The exiled Iraqis went along with their sponsors, and remained confined to camps in Iran in order to prevent reinitiating hostilities with Saddam.[913] This can be contrasted with SCIRI's distancing of itself from Iran after its return to Iraq.[914] The name change to ISCI and statements distancing ISCI from *velayet-e faqih* demonstrated that ISCI was willing to chart a more independent course (at least rhetorically).[915] However, client dependence is clearly not the most important factor in the Iran/Badr case study. If it

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909 Guimarães, "Origins," 324–25; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 12–13, 73, 85, 87.

910 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56.

911 "Shiite Politics," 3; Alaaldin, "Iran's Weak Grip."

912 "Shiite Politics," 5.

913 "Shiite Politics," 5.

914 Garrison, "Disaggregating the 'Axis of Resistance,'" 60, 63–65.

915 "Shiite Politics," i, 15–16, 21; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14; Visser, "Taming the Hegemonic Power.," 36–37.

were, then the Badr Organization would have followed its former political wing in drifting away from Iran—something it certainly has not done.[916]

The Cuba/MPLA case study testifies more clearly to the importance of client dependence as an element of ECM. The Cubans set FAPLA military objectives in 1975, when the MPLA depended on the Cubans for its very survival.[917] As the conventional threat to the MPLA receded, the MPLA began to depend more heavily on the Soviets for material support than they did on the Cubans—who were largely limited to garrison duty.[918] By 1984/1985, Soviet advisors had replaced the Cubans in setting FAPLA objectives.[919] It was the reintroduction of large numbers of conventional Cuban forces on the battlefield in 1988 that, more than anything else, allowed the Cubans to once again decisively influence MPLA objectives on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.[920]

While the second case study demonstrates the importance of client dependence to effective client management, CD's limited importance in the first case study suggests that sponsors who are unable or unwilling to build their clients' dependence can offset that lack of dependence by manipulating the other elements of ECM. We have already seen how successful the Iranian approach to SO was. Iranian manipulation of COE and CC likewise followed a completely different pattern than that taken by the Cubans, and may help to explain the continued IRGC success with ECM even after the Badr Organization no longer relied on Iran for sanctuary.

D. CLIENT ORGANIZATIONAL ENFORCEMENT

Both my quantitative and qualitative findings affirmed the validity of client organizational enforcement as a critical element of ECM. The quantitative analysis

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916 George, "Breaking Badr"; Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 18; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 112.

917 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 66, 80–86, 101; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 117; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 273–75; Spikes, *Angola and the Politics of Intervention*, 200–203; Guimarães, "Origins," 292, 319–20; Bender, "Angola," 3, 12.

918 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 119–20, 150–51, 183, 191–92; Malaquias, "Angola's Foreign Policy," 38.

919 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 183, 191–93, 276–77.

920 George, 208–212; 246–247; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 83–84.

demonstrates the significant negative relationship that *Rebel Organizational Centralization* has with the incidence of *Rebel Desertion* and with the combined incidence of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion* in a given conflict environment. Though Iran and Cuba took contrasting approaches to COE with their affiliates in Iraq and Angola, both sponsors manipulated the factor to their advantage. Iran took the novel approach of encouraging the proliferation of multiple, ideologically-aligned groups out of its initial SCIRI/Badr core, while Cuba employed a more traditional strategy of supporting Neto against any and all factional opposition.[921]

In Iraq, the IRGC often encouraged splits among its affiliates, most obviously with the split of AAH and other "special groups" from Moqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, but also notably with the long, slow breakup of SCIRI/ISCI and the Badr Organization.[922] In these examples, the Iranians maintained or deepened their relations with the more compatible clients—Badr, AAH and other special groups—at the expense of a difficult client (in Sadr's case), and a less compatible and less relevant client (in the case of SCIRI/ISCI).[923] Iran's practice of occasionally weakening COE by supporting factionalism cannot be understood solely as a means of enabling more compatible clients. As with the Iranian approach to CC, the new, more compatible organizations were a part of the wider Iranian network of Iraqi affiliates.[924] It made sense to weaken an unreliable client like Sadr by backing more compatible, better organized factions of his movement.[925] However, this same logic cannot be applied to the establishment of *Kataib Hezbollah* or to al-Sheibani's network staying underground.[926] Neither KH nor the al-Sheibani network joined the Badr Organization in engaging semi-constructively with

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921 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 128–31.

922 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 14, 56; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 181, 183; Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 24, 39; Visser, "Religious Alliances," 6; Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Smyth, "Good Militias?"

923 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 34–35, 45; Garrison, "Disaggregating the Axis of Resistance," 65–67; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 181, 183; Habib, "Shifting Shiite Allegiances"; Ali, "ISW Blog."

924 Smyth, "Shiite Jihad," 56.

925 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 34–35, 45.

926 Felter, and Fishman, 7, 24–25, 84–85; Rayburn, *Iraq After America*, 187.

coalition forces.[927] These two examples are better understood as diversification of the IRGC client portfolio to include organizations capable of assuming different roles, than as splits to sanction the Badr Organization, or to minimize dependence on it.[928]

In Angola, the Cubans took the opposite approach to client organizational enforcement, repeatedly backing Neto against his internal rivals.[929] During Chipenda's Eastern Revolt Castro maintained his rhetorical and limited training support to Neto and the MPLA.[930] During Alves's coup attempt the Cubans were essential in suppressing the Nitistas.[931]

As with the other factors of effective client management, different sponsor objectives and different circumstances are likely responsible for the different approaches to COE. However, one important difference in the two sponsor-affiliate relationships is contiguity. Iran's contiguity and history of conflict with Iraq led the IRGC to seek to prevent the establishment of a strong, centralized, independent regime in its neighbor.[932] This contrasts with the Iranian approach to supporting Hassan Nasrallah's leadership of Lebanese Hezbollah (LH).[933] The IRGC has consistently supported Nasrallah, unlike the neighboring Syrians, who used al-Tufayli's "revolution of the hungry" to weaken LH COE in an attempt to punish Nasrallah and gain his compliance.[934] Iran's approach to LH COE in Lebanon was more akin to the Cuban approach in Angola than to the Iranian

927 "Shiite Politics," 9–11, 13; Beehner, "Shiite Militias and Iraq's Security Forces"; Visser, "Religious Alliances."

928 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6, 55; Ostovar, *Vanguard of the Imam*, 173–74.

929 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46, 128–31; Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63, 73; Bender, "Angola," 26; Guimarães, "Origins," 308; Klinghoffer, "The Soviet Union and Angola," 22; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 120, 131.

930 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 35, 44–46; Marcum, *The Angolan Revolution II*, 225; Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 244.

931 George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 128–31.

932 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6–7.

933 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 606–7.

934 Tamm, 606–7.

approach in Iraq.[935] Because Castro needed a strong local partner prior to withdrawal from Angola, the Cubans boosted Neto's COE. They had nothing to fear from a strong MPLA regime in Angola, as they did not share a border. The importance of contiguity in driving sponsor approaches to COE finds only the most limited support in my quantitative research, which shows that *Contiguity* has a weakly negative relationship with *Rebel Organizational Centralization*. However, this finding was not statistically significant in most specifications.

E.   CLIENT COMPETITION

The quantitative analysis strongly underscores the importance of client competition. *Rebel Count* is the only independent variable with statistical significance that increases all three measures of *Rebel Defiance and Desertion*. The substantive effects of this factor are also stronger than any of the other variables considered. In the case studies, client competition seems to follow a pattern similar to client organizational enforcement. Iran, a contiguous sponsor, worked with a wide spectrum of local affiliates in Iraq.[936] Cuba, a non-contiguous sponsor, focused only on partnering with Neto and the MPLA.[937] I speculate that the reasons for these contrasting approaches to CC are the same as the reasons for COE. However, in the quantitative chapter the relationship between *Contiguity* and *Rebel Count* was not robust to the inclusion of fixed effects. This lack of robust significance may be due to the nature of the data. Popovic's SOR dataset only examines support to rebels, while my qualitative research examined relationships that started as sponsorship of rebels and then continued after liberation or regime change.

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935 I believe there are three major factors that explain Iran's different approaches when applying the factors of ECM to Badr and LH. First, contiguity plays a large part. Lebanon is never going to invade Iran like Iraq did under Saddam. Second, the Shiite population in Lebanon is at best a plurality. In Iraq it is a majority. Thus, for Lebanese demographic and political reasons, it does not make sense for Iran to fragment/factionalize its core Lebanese ally. It needs a strong Hezbollah to exert influence on Lebanese politics and society (Syria, for much of LH's existence, was occupying Lebanon and could exert direct influence on Lebanese politics). Finally, Hezbollah is Iran's ally against Israel—the strongest military power in the region. Iran needs Hezbollah to be united and strong so it can be a more effective partner against the Israeli military.

936 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

937 Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy*, 63; George, *The Cuban Intervention*, 46; Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War*, 120.

Indeed, during the Iran-Iraq War, Iran encouraged unity among the various Shia exile opposition parties, seeking to merge the Dawa Party with SCIRI.[938] The attempt failed, but it was the opposite approach to that pursued after OIF.[939] This is likely due to the greater need for battlefield effectiveness, as well as alignment of objectives, when attempting to accomplish regime change.[940]

F. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Effective client management has significant implications for the way in which United States Special Operations Forces (as well as conventional forces and interagency partners) conduct business. In the wake of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the United States has increasingly chosen indirect strategies in pursuit of its military objectives, relying more on local partners than on large-scale conventional deployments. A quick glance at the SOR dataset shows that this is not just an American trend, but a global one—which has been ongoing since at least 1968.[941] Without applying the principles of effective client management to these indirect strategies, practitioners from the United States and other sponsor countries risk long-term problems with their local affiliates.

U.S. Army Special Operations Forces have historically been the leaders in U.S. military practice of indirect, special warfare strategies relying on local affiliates. USASOC 2035, the latest statement of the commander's vision, is no exception. An understanding of ECM both supports and enriches the four pillars of ARSOF capability outlined in USASOC 2035, especially the "Indigenous Approach" and "Understand and Influence."[942] The indigenous approach advocates application of ARSOF's unique sponsor oversight capabilities to "use empowered populations living in the region" to

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938 "Shiite Politics," 2–3.

939 Felter, and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 6.

940 Tamm, "Rebel Leaders, Internal Rivals, and External Resources," 601.

941 Popovic, "Research"; Popovic, "Fragile Proxies."

942 Kenneth E. Tovo et al., "USASOC2035 Overview.pdf," July 26, 2017, 35, http://www.soc.mil/Assorted%20Pages/USASOC2035%20Overview.pdf.

solve problems.[943] By demonstrating the importance of sponsor oversight, my research provides empirical support for USSOF application of the indigenous approach. It also provides four other critical factors for SOF practitioners to understand and leverage when taking the indigenous approach. USASOC 2035 addresses two of these factors using slightly different language when discussing "The ARSOF Approach to Partner Capacity Building."[944] While most of this approach deals with sponsor oversight, "Leader and Cadre Development," "Institutional Development," and "Unit Identity, *Esprit de Corps* and Unique Organizational Culture," are related to client organizational enforcement.[945] My quantitative analysis suggests that partners with higher degrees of COE are less likely to defy or desert sponsors in unconventional warfare scenarios. The Angola case study likewise affirms the importance of COE for the Cubans, who were—like USSOF—non-contiguous, expeditionary sponsors. The ARSOF approach to building partner capacity also emphasizes "Quality of Equipment," which can be part of client dependence—a factor whose importance my qualitative research affirms.

Along with the aspects of sponsor oversight, client organizational enforcement and client dependence highlighted in USASOC 2035, it is important for practitioners to consider sponsor competition and client competition. Modern conflict environments are increasingly complex and characterized by multiple competing sponsors and clients. For the United States, sponsor competition is a fact of life, especially in the conduct of unconventional warfare operations in concert with local, often contiguous sponsors. Likewise, client competition is increasingly prevalent, whether for our affiliates in Syria, among our opponents in Afghanistan, or inside the various government-aligned forces fighting the Islamic State in Iraq. Understanding and leveraging all these factors is critical for maintaining the effectiveness of the indigenous approach. The factors of ECM are also essential for the "Understand and Influence" pillar of ARSOF capability.[946] "[L]ong-term partner nation relationships and an advanced understanding of complex

943 Tovo et al., 35.

944 Tovo et al., 27.

945 Tovo et al., 35.

946 Tovo et al., 5.

environments" are hallmarks of regionally-aligned USSOF personnel.[947] These relationships and understanding can be combined with knowledge of ECM's factors to positively influence U.S. sponsor-affiliate relationships, as well as to damage those of our opponents.

The United States is currently involved in a number of countries that could be characterized as complex conflict environments. In Iraq, Badr and other Iranian-aligned militias continue to attempt to extend their influence within the Popular Mobilization Forces and Iraqi Security Forces. The United States should continue its sponsor competition with the Iranians as the battle against the Islamic State enters its next, less conventional phase. The United States should, however, remember that the Islamic State is a common enemy and that the competition with Iran for influence should not trump shared concerns about defeating the Sunni jihadists. With large-scale, force-on-force battles becoming less prevalent, America's favored Iraqi Arab partners—the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF) and tribal forces—will retain their importance in fighting the Islamic State's insurgent and terrorist tactics in Sunni regions. Shia militias will likely inflame inter-sectarian tensions if they are used to garrison liberated Sunni regions. American leaders should encourage the Iraqis to depend more on ISOF and the Sunni tribal forces than on the Shia PMF—not just to compete with the Iranians and to build Iraqi dependence—but because these forces are better suited to the COIN and CT missions that will be needed in the coming months and years. By continuing to provide materiel, ISR and air support to these units, the United States can maintain a degree of client dependence, which ideally will fade as the Islamic State's threat fades. Of course, Iran will continue to exercise significant influence in Iraqi society and politics. However, the United States can enhance GOI client organizational enforcement by continuing to encourage Prime Minister Abadi to expand the government's control over the PMF, while exerting pressure on the Iraqi parliament to dissolve those forces.[948] This will

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947 Tovo et al., 5.

948 Suadad al-Salhy, "Haider Al-Abadi, the 'Weak and Sluggish' Man Who Rose to Tower over Iraq," *Middle East Eye*, November 3, 2017, http://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iraq-haider-al-abadi-islamic-state-kurdistan-1637801335.

likely be a slow (and probably only partially successful) process, complicated by Iraqi politics and the relatively high popularity of the PMF in the wake of the Islamic State's conventional defeat.

If done subtly, the United States can use its historical relationship with and support for the Iraqi Kurds as leverage in a type of client competition between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the GOI. Hypothetically, subtle hints of future support for Iraqi Kurdish independence—like increasing USSOF partnership with the *Peshmerga*, or expanding U.S. bases in Kurdistan—could be deployed if the GOI drifts too far into the Iranian embrace. Though Kurdish independence is not currently a desirable outcome, its threat is useful, and the real political disagreement over the issue in the U.S. Congress can be leveraged to support U.S. diplomacy by making subtle or even implicit threats seem credible.[949] Finally, USSOF should maintain the sponsor oversight that was established during OIF (and even earlier in the case of Kurdish forces), maintained during the lean years of the U.S. withdrawal, and re-invigorated during the recent campaign. The professionalism, combat proficiency and relative freedom from sectarian intrigue displayed by Iraqi Special Operations Forces are testaments to the effectiveness of long-term USSOF advisory efforts, which rely on sponsor oversight as a key element of the indigenous approach.[950]

Iraq is only one of the complex conflict environments in which it will be critical for the United States to apply an understanding of effective client management. ECM is a fundamental skill set for special warfare practitioners—one which must be applied whenever USSOF take the indigenous approach.

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949 Joel Gehrke, "Senators Warn Abadi That ISIS Could Return to Iraq," *The Washington Examiner*, November 3, 2017, http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/senators-warn-abadi-that-isis-could-return-to-iraq/article/2639553.

950 Tovo et al., "USASOC 2035," 22–23.

VIII. SUPPLEMENTAL

The R code used for the quantitative chapter of this thesis is available for anyone who wishes to recreate that work, or to build on it. If you are interested in obtaining the code, please contact the Dudley Knox Library at the Naval Postgraduate School.

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